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AN  
INQUIRY  
INTO  
CERTAIN VULGAR OPINIONS  
CONCERNING  
THE CATHOLIC INHABITANTS  
AND  
THE ANTIQUITIES OF IRELAND:

In a Series of Letters from thence, addressed to a Protestant  
Gentleman in England.

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By the Rev. J. MILNER, D. D. F. S. A. &c.

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*Vinibus occiduis describitur optima tellus,  
Nomine, et antiquis Scotia scripta libris:  
Insula dives opum, &c.;  
In qua Scotorum gentes habitare merentur;  
Inclita gens hominum milite, pace, fide.*

St. Donatus, Episc. Fessul. Sacrl. Nono.

---

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# AN INQUIRY

INTO

*CERTAIN VULGAR OPINIONS, &c.*



## LETTER I.

*Dublin, June 27, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

“IS it possible,” said I to myself, as I read over the Parliamentary Debates on a late question, “that the charges against  
“ the Catholics of Ireland, so confidently  
“ brought by one party, and so faintly denied,  
“ if not almost conceded, by the other, can be  
“ true? Are, then, my brethren in the sister



“ island so destitute of education, morality, re-  
 “ ligious, and civilization ; and are their clergy,  
 “ in particular, so scandalously illiterate, super-  
 “ stitious, and disloyal as they are represented to  
 “ be? It is no such long journey,” continued  
 F, “ from this my residence to the shore of the  
 “ Irish channel, and from thence to the capital of  
 “ Ireland is but the voyage of a few hours.  
 “ What hinders me, then, from forming my  
 “ own opinion upon these matters, by observing  
 “ and conversing with the Irish Catholics in  
 “ their own country ?”

I must, however, Sir, observe to you, that  
 previously to my holding this soliloquy, I had  
 conceived a wish of viewing one of the political  
 phenomena of the present times ; a people, with-  
 out any revolution or other visible cause, rising up,  
 as it were, all at once, from apparent insignificance  
 and absolute contempt, to the first rank of im-  
 portance and respectability in the scale of na-  
 tions. Within your memory, Sir, and mine, the  
 Irish Catholics were hardly thought worthy of  
 notice amongst politicians : they were almost  
 non-entities in the law and constitution of the  
 empire : if they were mentioned in the legisla-  
 tive assemblies, it was merely for the purpose of  
 adding some new weight to a system of legal op-  
 pression avowedly contrived to grind them to  
 atoms : when, behold, at the present day, these  
 Helotes, these Gibeonites, the hewers of wood  
 and drawers of water in the land of their nati-  
 vity, have suddenly acquired so much impor-



tance as to justify the first statesmen of the age in unanimously and emphatically assuring us, that the fortune of the British empire depends upon theirs.

As I myself am no politician, I take up this alarming assertion on the credit of those great men who are well known to have often repeated it: but thus much I can pronounce from my own observations, that the fate of us English Catholics depends upon that of our brethren in Ireland. If their claims are overlooked, ours will never be thought worthy of notice. On the other hand, whatever redress of grievances or legal privileges they obtain, we shall not long remain deprived of. Our political weight and importance, compared with theirs, is small indeed. In a word, they are the stately vessel which catches the breeze and stems the tide, we are the cock-boat which is towed in her wake.

Such, Sir, were my musings, and such my inclinations with respect to a tour to Ireland, when, a week ago, I received a letter from a respected and most valuable friend of mine then near Dublin, in which he entreated me so earnestly, and with such powerful motives, to pay him and certain other friends in his company a visit, that I hesitated no longer about the expedition.—Already, then, after passing through places in England familiar to me, I have surveyed the romantic vale of Llangollen, and the stupendous scenery round about Capel-Carrig and Snowden. I have traversed the bar-



ren heaths of Anglesca, where, instead of the frantic Druids of ancient times, described by Tacitus, I have seen the assembled population of the island agitated by the more enthusiastic orgies of religious jumping. To be brief, I have crossed the narrow, but rough channel, the dread of which deprives you and many other Englishmen, who descant upon the Irish Catholics without knowing them, of the advantage I possess in being able to see them and converse with them. I now also have viewed the celebrated Bay of Dublin, confessedly the most beautiful in Europe next to that of Naples, studded as it is on each shore with innumerable shining villages, villas, and martello towers, and bounded on this side by the majestic hill of Howth, and on that by the aspiring and diversified mountains of Wicklow, with the vast and gorgeous capital of Ireland in the centre of the scene; and now, behold! having escaped from the plucking of the pigeon-house\*, I am safely lodged upon one of the quays of the Liffey.

I know, Sir, you would not forgive me, were I to omit communicating to you the result of my observations and reflections upon matters which have so often been the subject of our friendly debates, now that they are under my eye. I shall therefore comply with your wish in such manner as my leisure will permit, after stipulating with you for that perfect freedom of judgment and ex-

\* The Custom-House is there situated.



pression, without which all inquiry and discussion is nugatory and ridiculous. By the same rule, Sir, after I shall have delivered my opinion, you will be at liberty to judge of it, and to controvert it as you please.

*Hanc veniam petimus damusque vicissim.*

I have the honour to remain,  
Your faithful servant,  
J. M.

---

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## LETTER II.

*Maynooth, June 29, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

THE very morning after my arrival in Dublin particular business conducted me to this place, which is about a dozen miles distant from it. In my journey hither, and in my subsequent excursions, I have had opportunities of surveying the shores of the Liffy, which, if not so majestic and so rich in princely villas as the Thames is to the west of London, is more enchantingly diversified by its meandering turns, its alternate shallows and



depths, its hanging woods, and its lofty banks, now smoothly shelving to the water edge, now surmounting it in bold rocks and perpendicular precipices.

The universal population of Maynooth, and particularly the inhabitants of the Royal Catholic College, still mourn for the loss of their landlord and friend, the late good Duke of Leinster. The noble palace and domain of his family border the town to the east of it, whilst the college, with the magnificent ruins of the ancient castle of the Fitzgeralds, terminate it to the west. The new building consists of lodging rooms, schools, a church, a library, a hall, and other offices, erected in a style worthy the munificence of his Majesty and the liberality of parliament, and suitable to the accommodation of 200 ecclesiastical students, besides a provost, a bursar, professors, and servants. An extension of one of the wings for the lodging of 200 additional students \* (for whose support, during the ensuing twelve months, the present parliament has voted 5000*l.* in addition to the 8000*l.* granted heretofore) is far advanced.—Methinks, Sir, I hear you exclaim, with a, pish ! as many others have exclaimed before you : “ What a needless waste of money, for “ the support of an illiterate, uncivilized set of

\* When the length of the preparation for taking catholic orders, and the uncertainty of the students perseverance are considered, it is plain that even the enlarged establishment will not furnish half priests enough to supply the vacancies annually occurring by deaths amongst 2500 officiating clergy.



“ proselyting bigots, as the Roman catholic  
 “ clergy of Ireland are universally known to  
 “ be !”

Let us then, Sir, suppose that the present set of catholic clergy are really deficient in education and literature, yet if the poverty to which they have been reduced, and the laws which have existed, till of late, against their receiving an education, and especially their past literary glory and services are considered, candour, I think, will shield them from the severe censure too generally passed upon them in this respect. For who, Sir, were the luminaries of the western world, when the sun of science had almost set upon it? Who were the instructors of nations during four whole centuries, but the Irish clergy? To them you are indebted for the preservation of the Bible, the Fathers, and the classics; in short, of the very means by which you yourself have acquired whatever literature you possess. In whatever part of this extensive island St. Patrick preached the gospel, he founded convents and schools of instruction, by means of which he enlightened and civilized the inhabitants at the same time that he converted them. These schools soon became so famous, that they were frequented by crowds of students from France, Flanders, and Germany\*, as well as from the

\* Flaccus Albinus, alias Alcuin in vita St. Willibrordi.



different parts of Britain\*. Gildas, the most ancient of our British writers whose works are extant, studied for a long time at St Patrick's seminary of Armagh†, as did, in the following century, St. Agilbert, a Frenchman, the second bishop of the West Saxons‡. Soon after this, namely in the seventh century, we find great numbers of our countrymen, poor as well as rich, flocking to Ireland as to a general mart of literature, where the hospitable Scots, as the inhabitants were then called, with a generosity unknown in every other nation, not only instructed them gratis, but also fed them gratis§. At length a residence in Ireland, like a residence now at an university, was considered as almost essential to establish a literary character||.

Not content, however, with teaching the foreigners who came to them for instruction, the

\* Bed. Hist. Ecc. l. iii. c. 27.

† Adamnan. Apud. Usser. Primord.

‡ “Agilbertus, natione Gallus, sed legendarum gratiâ scripturarum in Hibernia non parvo tempore commoratus.” Bed. l. iii. c. 7.

§ “Multi nobilium simul et mediocrium de gente Anglorum, relictâ patriâ insulâ, vel divinæ lectionis, vel continentioris vitæ gratiâ, illo secesserant. Quos omnes Scoti, libentissime suscipientes victum quotidianum, sine pretio, libros quoque et magisterium gratuitum præbere curabant.” Bed. l. iii. c. 27.

|| I cannot forbear quoting here the often repeated lines which Camden extracted from the life of St. Sulgenius, who flourished in the eight century:

“Exemplo patrum, commotus amore legendi,

“Ivit ad Hibernos sophiâ mirabile claros.”



Irish clergy, in the eighth and ninth centuries, spread themselves over the greater part of Europe for the sake of converting and civilizing the remaining Pagans in the northern parts of it, and of instructing the unlettered Christians, as was the case with most of them every where\*. St. Killian became the apostle of Franconia, St. Rummold of Brabant, St. Virgilius of Carinthia, St. Columban of the Swiss, St. Gallus of the Grisons, being all of them Irishmen; not to speak of St. Donatus, bishop of Fessuli†, and St. Cataldus, bishop of Tarentum, who illuminated the church of Italy, nor of St. Fursy, St. Fiacre, St. Firmin, St. Rupert, &c. who illustrated the churches of France and Germany. In a word, there is hardly a diocese in the countries here mentioned which does not record the learning and sanctity of several illustrious missionaries from Ireland who formerly served it. The most celebrated nurseries of learning in those ancient times, both in our own country and abroad, were all instituted by Irish scholars. It was the learned Irish bishop St. Aidan who instituted that

\* “ Quid Hiberniam commemorem contempto Pelagi discrimine,  
 “ pœnetotam, cum grege philosophorum ad nostra Gallica littora  
 “ migrantem, quorum quisque, ut peritior est, ultro sibi indicit  
 “ exilium ut Salomoni sapientissimo famuletur ad votum.”

Erricus Antissiodorensis nono sæculo.

† This is the religious poet from whose verses in praise of his country I have taken my motto. See these verses more at large in Colgan upon St. Patrick.



of Lindisferne, which enlightened the northern and midland parts of England. It was the venerable monk Macdolph who opened the famous school of Malmsbury, from which sacred and profane literature, Greek as well as Latin\*, was diffused over the southern and western parts of it. St. Columkille founded the learned monastery of Jona; in the western isles; St. Columban those of Luxieu and Bobis†; St. Gall the celebrated one which bore his name amongst the Alps. In short, we are equally indebted to the Irish for the most renowned universities of modern times. Claudius Clemens was the first professor of the university of Paris, as Joannes Scotus was of the one at Ticinum, or Padua‡. Even our boasted university of Oxford is greatly, if not chiefly, indebted for its foundation to the last mentioned acute and eloquent scholar, who first opened an academy for the instruction of English children upon the plan of the aforesaid foreign universities, and who excited the great

\* “Maydulph, natione Scotus eruditione philosophus.” Gul. Malms. de Pontific.

† “Cum per totam Galliam divinæ religionis fervor torperet, Dominus Christus ad repellendas ignaviæ tenebras de occiduis Hiberniæ partibus splendidissimum radium Gallicis finibus emergere præcepit, B. Columbanum egregium Scotigenam.” Diplom. Caroli Magni, apud O’Flaharty Ogygia.

‡ “Cum idem Carolus regnare cæpisset et studia literarum ubique propemodum essent in oblivione, contigit duos Scotos de Hibernia in litus Gallicum devenire et in sæcularibus et in sacris literis mirabiliter eruditos, &c.” Ex Notkero Monacho S. Galli nono sæculo apud O’Flaharty,



Alfred to institute one equal to them in his own dominions \*.

True it is, the calamity which almost extinguished the flame of literature in England, I mean the destruction of the monasteries by the Danes, was productive of the same effect in Ireland. Nevertheless, it is easy to prove that the Irish clergy did not fall into total ignorance during the dark period which succeeded this storm; as likewise, that they soon recovered a considerable degree of their former literary credit; and in short, that there was an uninterrupted succession of men eminent for their learning and talents amongst them, even down to the second destruction of monasteries by the tyrant Henry VIII. Even under the cruel and almost uninterrupted persecution which they have endured till within these few years, they have contrived to acquire not only professional, but also classical and ornamental literature. Several of them have studied the classics and sacred literature under hedges, for want of schools, and others

\* Usher Primord. The Centuriators of Magdeburg make Joannes Scotus the first professor at Oxford; but he seems to have died a little before the schools were actually opened there.—N. B. It is agreed amongst the learned, and it is evident by comparison, that our ancient English or Saxon characters are borrowed from those of Ireland. The celebrated Rd. Kirwan, Esq. L. L. D. P. R. I. A. with whom I had the honour of holding a long conversation the other day, has published a learned Essay on the Primeval Language, which he supposes was the Greek. I cannot, however, help thinking that the Celtic, which is the root of the Irish, has better pretensions to this honour.



have spread themselves over the continent of Europe, in order to acquire that knowledge which their predecessors originally diffused throughout it. The success which they have generally met with in their studies has been equal to the ardour with which they have applied to them. Accordingly, Sir, you will find, upon inquiry, that the Irish students in the foreign universities, down to the very period of the late revolution, carried off more than their due proportion of prizes and professorships by the sheer merit of superior talents and learning, and a much greater proportion than fell to the lot of all other foreigners in the countries in question put together.

I am far, Sir, from undertaking to give you a list of the Irish Catholic clergy, since the reformation, so called, who have left incontrovertible proofs of their cultivated minds and superior literature in their writings: neither my leisure nor my means permit me at present to undertake the task. I will, however, present you with the names of a few of these. Amongst the prelates of this description were the R. R. Daniel Roth, Catholic Bishop of Ossory, who published a most interesting account of catholic affairs about two centuries ago\*. The M. R. Peter Talbot, Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, a celebrated controversial writer, who died a

\* *Analecta de Rebus Catholicis in Anglia.*



prisoner for his religion in the said city; the R. R. Daniel O'Daly, who died Bishop of Conimbria, in Portugal; and the R. R. Thomas Burke, Bishop of Ossory, both of them learned and celebrated historians, of the order of St. Dominic; the late M. R. James Butler, Archbishop of Cashel, and the victorious opponent of Dr. Woodward, Bishop of Cloyne. Amongst the learned writers of the second order of clergy were the R. Richard Stanyhurst, the well known historian; Abbé M'Geoghan, —; the R. J. Colgan, —; the R. Luke Wadding, —; the R. J. Lynch, —; the R. John O'Heyne, —; the R. Antony Lupi, alias Wolf, an antiquarian; the R. John Hacket, a theologian; the R. Dominic Lynch, —; the R. F. Fitzsimons, the successful antagonist in controversy against Archbishop Usher; the R. Edmund Burke, controvertist; the R. James Usher, author of the *Free Inquiry* \*; and the R. Arthur O'Leary, the

\* This most able and learned scholar was the immediate descendant of Archbishop Usher, who betaking himself to the study of the controversy carried on between his ancestor and the aforesaid F. Fitzsimons, was so overpowered and convinced by the arguments of the latter, that he abandoned the religion in which he had been educated, and embraced that of the ancient Church. Being a widower, he took holy orders in this Church, and was the first writer who may be said to have defended it in the face of the public, his letters having been published in the *Public Ledger*, from which they were extracted, and published apart in a work now upon sale, called: *A Free Examination of the common Methods employed to prevent the Growth of Popery*. Mr. Usher left a son, who is still living, and whom I had the pleasure of seeing in one of the catholic establish-



triumphant, and at the same time amiable victor of John Wesley, and of the other enemies of religious toleration\*, &c. I do not mention certain living writers, of whom posterity will speak,

ments in Ireland. The plan of his Letters, which made a great noise in their time, is as follows. There being a great outcry concerning the alledged increase of popery in England about the year 1767, Mr. Usher, in his first letter, calls upon well informed and ingenious persons to account for the fact, and to explain upon what principle error can prove an over-match for truth, ignorance for learning, idolatry for pure religion. Having, in his following letters, refuted the idle and ridiculous reasons assigned, by different writers who attempted to answer him, for this strange circumstance, he thus, in substance, explains the true cause of it: "You learned contro-  
 "vertists, when you attack the Church of Rome, never fail to as-  
 "sault her in some point or other in which she is impregnable. You  
 "accuse her of teaching idolatry or impiety, or the breach of faith  
 "with heretics, or the lawfulness of murdering them, or some other  
 "immorality. This, to be sure, gains you a temporary applause  
 "amongst your zealous partisans, and inflames their hatred against  
 "Papists. But, in the mean time, the Papists themselves, being  
 "conscious of the falsehood of these charges, are confirmed in their  
 "religion; and serious protestant seekers, discovering by degrees  
 "the same falsehood, are induced to go over to the popish commu-  
 "nion, &c." Besides this Examination, Mr. Usher also wrote *Clio upon Taste*, a work which deserves to be placed on the same shelf with Burke's *Beautiful and Sublime*. In writing the Examination he was assisted by my lamented friend, the late worthy, upright, and pious John Walker, author of the *Pronouncing Dictionary, Elements of Elocution, the Rhetorical Grammar, Deism disarmed, &c.* This ingenious author may with truth be called the Guido d'Arezzo of elocution, having discovered the scale of speaking sounds, by which reading and delivery are now reduced to a system.

\* How little does this head of a great party, and chief author of the riots in 1780, appear when opposed to the deep learning, the sound logic, and the sterling wit of an O'Leary! See Remarks on John Wesley's Letters, in his Tracts, p. 205. Keating and Co.



because they are my friends, and therefore I might be suspected of partiality in the account I should give of them.

I have the honour to remain, &c.

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### LETTER III.

*Maynooth, June 30, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

I Make no doubt that you will consider my letter of yesterday as a *set off*, and that, being conscious of the ignorance and stupidity of the present race of officiating clergy in Ireland, I am desirous of investing them with the past glories of their predecessors. To be sure, Sir, it is a difficult task to disabuse you and other Englishmen of your prejudice against Irish priests, if you are determined to entertain it : nevertheless, I beg you, by way of forming a right judgment upon this matter, to consider of an answer to the three following questions. As you must admit that the natives of Ireland have not degenerated in their bodily powers, have you any reason to suppose that they have fallen off from their ancient fame with respect to



their mental faculties? Secondly, it being an established rule with us to consider mental talents next to piety and morality in the choice of candidates for holy orders, is it not likely that the clergy in Ireland should prove to be endowed with, at least, an ordinary share of natural genius? Thirdly, do you conceive it possible that young men thus endowed should spend ten or twelve of the choicest years of their lives in intense application to study, without acquiring some share of knowledge and intellectual improvement? You will probably say, that to solve the last question, it is necessary you should know how these ten or twelve years have been employed; what books have been read; in short, that you should like to know, as an enlightened and liberal reviewer has expressed a wish to know, “what is the course at Maynooth\*?” I answer, that if this is not known it is not the fault of the superiors of the college. Their well-frequented library† and their class books are open to the examination, not only of the Lord Chancellor and the Judges of Ireland, who are bound at stated times to visit the establishment, but also of every civil inquirer. I will endeavour to give you a general idea of this course. An indefinite time, then, perhaps two or three years, is employed in the study of English,

\* See the *Edinburgh Review* in its strictures upon Carr's *Stranger in Ireland*.

† To the fact here supposed I myself am a witness.



Irish\*, Latin, and French Grammar†. After this, a distinct year is appointed for the study of poetry, and another year for that of rhetoric. At the end of each year public examinations are held, at which the literati of the neighbourhood, of whatever communion they may be, are invited to assist, and also bear a part in them‡. This forms what is called the course of the Humanity Studies; after which begin those of a higher order. One whole year is always devoted to logic and metaphysics, upon Lock's system; and another to mathematics, physics, and astronomy, in which Newton is the chief guide. The whole of this philosophical course the student must publicly defend, not by answering a few questions well known before hand, but by solving the objections of each individual present amongst the company indiscriminately invited to these defensions. To the study of philosophy succeeds that of divinity, including canon law and ecclesiastical history, which takes up four whole years, under three distinct professors, (at

\* A professor of the Irish language forms one part of the establishment: an excellent constitution for perpetuating perhaps the most ancient language in the world, the Celtic.

† Regularly speaking, the students are expected to have acquired the greater part of these branches of knowledge previously to their admission at Maynooth.

‡ At the small seminary of Kilkenny, which I afterwards visited, I found a boy explaining Lucian and Homer. The established bishop, who was formerly provost of Trinity College, Dublin, frequently honours the examinations there with his presence, and was expected the morning when I attended.



least there is this number of them at Maynooth) a professor of speculative theology, a second of morality, and a third of the holy scriptures. The divines, no less than the philosophers, are required publicly to defend their several treatises; and I may add, that they are no less willing than the last mentioned to exhibit their dictates and other class books to every civil stranger, of whatever religion, who chooses to inspect them. If all that I have here stated be matter of fact, and take notice, Sir, I challenge inquiry into the truth of it, where is the man who will dare to reproach the Irish Clergy with being uneducated and illiterate? Indeed, few of those who hold this language have received half so good an education\*.

\* It may be alledged that I have here exhibited a picture of the education at the Royal College of Maynooth, being in the neighbourhood of the capital, and under the eye of dignified visitors; whereas the present charge applies to the officiating clergy in general, and particularly to those in the remote parts of the island. To this I answer, that since I visited Maynooth I have seen other catholic seminaries, particularly those of Carlow and Kilkenny, and that the same studies are pursued, and I have reason to believe with equal success, in these as in the first mentioned. I must add, that having traversed a great part of Leinster and Munster, I have sought in vain amongst the parish priests and other clergy, in the towns and villages as well as in the cities, for those illiterate and uneducated men which they are all in general supposed to be. So far from being persons of this description, I have found them to be well informed, well behaved, gentle, modest, charitable, and pious. Some of them have occasionally been called into courts of justice, to give evidence in different causes; certain letters of others have been published on various occasions; yet who of them has said or written any thing unbecoming a scholar, a gentleman, or a Christian Divine?



I have spoken to the charge of ignorance brought against the Catholic Clergy; I will now speak to that of bigotry and proselyting; in doing which, I will not blink the question, but, having fairly explained it, I am content to take my share in the odium and contempt attached to the imputation.—If, then, the Catholic Clergy were not deeply persuaded that the change of religion and breach with the ancient Church, effected by Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, were undertaken upon unjustifiable grounds, and that their Church still continues to be the true Church of Christ, they would certainly be not only the most wretched, but also the most foolish of men, to suffer what they do suffer for adhering to it and serving it. Now, Sir, admitting them to be thus persuaded, would they not be destitute of the characteristical virtue of Christianity, were they to refuse communicating the advantage they possess to those whom they find sincerely engaged in the search of it? For they do not disturb the public peace by field preaching, nor that of private families, by intruding themselves into them uninvited. On the other hand, as it is not private emolument nor the aggrandizement of a party, but the mere exercise of a charitable office which they have in view in their communications with persons of a different communion, so they would conceive it a baseness and a crime to hold up any worldly consideration, hope, or fear to them, or to use any other impro-



per means for gaining proselytes. Accordingly, I maintain, without fear of confutation, that the conduct of the converts to catholicity in general, throughout Ireland, demonstrates the purity of the motives by which they have been induced to take this step, as, on the other hand, the behaviour of those who have left this communion evidently shews they have done it for the sake of expatiating in wider fields of belief and practice than were allowed them in their native Church.

Thus much, Sir, in vindication of the Catholic Clergy from this accusation. Let us now see how far the persons who bring this charge are themselves implicated in it. I have already had abundant means of learning that the Protestants of Ireland, in almost every part of it, are possessed of the most ardent zeal for proselyting the Catholics; and this not by the means of cool conviction and edifying example, but by downright bribes and terror. Here a protestant lady clothes, feeds, and provides for catholic children *exclusively*, whose parents will sell them to her at this price, for the sake of bringing them up Protestants; there a protestant landlord turns all his catholic tenants out of their farms, or exacts an oath, as the condition of holding them, that they will send their children to a protestant school which he has set up for the express purpose of proselytism. But why should I dwell upon private instances of the system of protestant proselyting, when it has been publicly professed and acted upon by the government of the coun-



try, ever since it gave up that of putting its subjects to death for adhering to their religion. In fact, Sir, unexampled as such proceedings are in past times, astonishing as it will appear in ages to come, no less than 25,000*l.* continue annually to be levied, in a great measure, upon the Catholics themselves, independently of the rents of immense landed estates for purchasing the children of indigent Catholics (in as much as no protestant child can be admitted into a charter school) and educating them in the protestant religion. In still greater violation of the laws of nature, these purchased victims are uniformly transported in covered waggons to the greatest distance possible from the residence of their parents; the children of the northern provinces being conveyed to the charter schools of the south, and those of the south to the schools in the north, in order that the parent may never have the consolation of embracing the child, lest he or she should again make a Papist of it, and that the child may never enjoy the advantage of a parent's love and support, for fear it should thereby lose those religious impressions which, at so great an expense, have been wrought upon it! The Turks, indeed, take away the children of their Greek subjects in order to recruit the ranks of their janissaries; but they do this from a motive of policy, not of religion: the Irish government alone, of all governments in the world, violates the law of God and nature, in extinguishing parental and filial affection, and in se-



parating parents and children for life, from a principle of proselytism ! If the theological dictates of the divines at Maynooth are inspected, it will be found that they condemn the practice of barely baptizing the children of Jews and Mahommedans, contrary to the will of their parents. In common decency, Sir, do not reproach us in future with bigotry and proselytism, at least till the charter schools are suppressed.

I have the honour to remain, &c.

## LETTER IV.

*Maynooth, June 30, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE yet another subject to write to you upon from this place, and that I have preferred doing in a separate letter rather than swelling my former to a disproportionable size. You have heard that, besides the ecclesiastical seminary at Maynooth, there is also a lay college for catholic young gentlemen intended for the world, which is now under the direction of a worthy friend of mine. The latter establishment, however, has no other communication with the former, except that its members



frequent the same church, and attend the same lectures in philosophy with the ecclesiastical students.

It has been asked both in parliament and out of it, "What need there is of a lay catholic college, "in addition to the ecclesiastical one?" and "Why at least those young men who are destined "for the various walks of life are not sent to the "public universities?" One answer to these questions is, that parents will judge for themselves in these matters, and that the school in question being supported at their expense, they are not obliged to give an account to any one of the motives for their choice. However, Sir, there is no reason why I should conceal from you what these motives are.—To speak the plain truth then—we wish our youth in general to be educated apart, precisely for the opposite reason to that which makes you wish them to be educated at the universities. You desire them to be sent to these in hopes that by associating with other youths, whom you call more liberal, we more lax, they may loose their religion, we wish to keep them at a distance from such society, for fear of the same consequence. We have proof, indeed, that this consequence does not always follow, but we have also proof that it frequently does follow. In fact, the catholic religion being much more strict and rigorous, both as to belief and practice, than that of the establishment, it is of course ridiculed by the members of the latter,



as being superstitious. Now the imputation of this blind and grovelling vice is what few young men of spirit can submit to. Hence they are under a continual temptation, when intimately and habitually mixed with protestant companions, of deserting their faith. Again, it is required of students in the universities to frequent the established service: now our church not permitting this, nor even winking at occasional conformity, it is clearly seen that these are not proper places of education for Catholics.

But, Sir, we are full as anxious about the morals as the faith of the rising generation. Now we have been taught by those writers of the day who have the best means of gaining accurate information concerning the state of morality in the universities, to form a very unfavourable opinion of it. Certain it is, that many things which would be attended with expulsion in our catholic places of education, appear as slight faults at the public colleges, judging of them from the conversation of very venerable members of them. Indeed I have received authentic information on this head which I do not choose to mention, but which confirms me in the opinion that a university education is by no means fit for a strict Catholic. The fact is, all large assemblies of mankind, without strong religious feelings, frequent religious exercises, and rigid discipline, are detrimental to the cause of morality, though, with these advantages, they may be highly beneficial



to it. In a word, Sir, a comparison between the best regulated protestant college, and any well-disciplined catholic seminary, will demonstrate the very great advantages which the latter has over the former in all the above-mentioned means of maintaining strict morality.

I have the honour, &c.

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## LETTER V.

*Dublin, July 6, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

**B**EING returned to Dublin, I have had an opportunity of viewing the public buildings which adorn it, the Custom-House, the Parliament-House, the four Courts, the Exchange, the Lying-in-Hospital, the Bridges, the Quays, Trinity College, and the Castle. The chief objection I have to these buildings in general, with the exception of the Castle and Trinity College, is that their magnificence is disproportioned to the appearance of the city in other respects, and to the circumstances of the people at whose expense they have been erected ; in the same manner as the statue of commerce, at the top of the first mentioned of these erections. is too colossal even for the elevated situation which it



holds, and appears, at that distance from the eye, to represent a Brobdinaggian female. Nothing could exceed my grief and indignation at seeing the demolition, now going on in parts of the new and inimitably beautiful Parliament House, under the direction of the Bank of Ireland, which has now got possession of it. Methinks the Irish Parliament, before it was guilty of the act of *felo de se*, might have provided for the unimpaired preservation of its sumptuous house, as a monument of its own existence, and as some consolation to the citizens of Dublin for their irreparable loss by the legislative union.

I have had opportunities, during the days I have spent here, of conversing and forming an acquaintance with several personages who are generally esteemed for their learning, talents, virtues, and public services. Amongst these I cannot but particularize, for their merit in all the above-mentioned points, the four catholic metropolitans, and the other catholic bishops, to the number of five or six, who happen to be in the city, or very near to it, at the present season. The public services of certain of these prelates are recorded in the official dispatches of Government, and in the rolls of the corporate bodies which have honoured them with letters of freedom, and the merits of them all are conspicuous in those Pastoral Letters and Remonstrances which they addressed to their respective flocks during the dreadful rebellion of 1798, by which



and their other exertions (seconded as they were by the general aid of the catholic priesthood) they prevented that sudden conflagration from spreading far and wide, and thereby probably saved the lives of thousands of his majesty's troops, and tens of thousands of his subjects. Their talents, natural and acquired, together with their christian and social virtues, have gained them general respect and regard, not only amongst their own people, but also amongst other religious denominations. The virtues which I most admired in them, and in others of their order whom I have occasionally conversed with, are their fraternal union and cordial co-operation in the discharge of their several duties, particularly in providing to the utmost of their power for the instruction, and the corporal as well as spiritual benefit of their numerous flocks, as well as for their perfect disinterestedness, to the eye of which their own advantages appear as nothing when compared with those of their people. You and your friends in England suppose, that nothing more is necessary to buy over the catholic bishops and clergy of Ireland than for parliament to vote a certain sum of money for this purpose ; but I have reason to believe that they never will consent to be bought to make a separate interest from that of their poor flocks, and that they would rather starve with them than appear to league against them. Indeed, were they to act this latter part, they would lose the confidence of the people, in which



case they would be rendered incapable of performing the task that would be exacted from them. In a word, Sir, I am persuaded that the catholic bishops and clergy will do their duty in promoting peace, patience, and loyalty amongst their people as they have hitherto done, without fee or reward, unless their proposed salaries should make part of an enlarged and liberal system for the relief of their countrymen, and particularly of the poorest class of them.

I am aware, Sir, that the very mention of catholic metropolitans and bishops in Ireland is enough to make some Protestants lose their temper and others their reason; the most distinguished amongst these is a noble and learned Lord, lately highly exalted in that part of the united kingdom, who by his speeches in parliament \*, and his writings addressed to the public †, has most zealously and indefatigably laboured to prepare the way for the destruction of the catholic hierarchy there. For this purpose he bedaubs it over with the most hideous colours, representing it as “an open defiance  
“ of the law ‡,—a corporation with all the forms  
“ and gradations of a distinct and firm govern-  
“ ment §,—a rivalship of the established clergy—  
“ and an attempt to seize upon their dignities,  
“ revenues, tithes,” &c. ||. Not content with sti-

\* See Substance of a Speech of Lord Redesdale in the House of Lords, May 1805, by authority.

† See *Thoughts on the Condition of Ireland*, lately published, and which is universally attributed to the aforesaid nobleman.

‡ Speech, p. 19. § P. 14. || Pp. 16. 45.



mulating a protestant legislature to abolish our ancient forms of ecclesiastical government, he calls upon the catholic laity to co-operate in the undertaking; assuring them that "this form is "not essential to their religion\*,"—that many of the second order of the clergy "wish to get rid "of it †,"—and that, this being got rid of, they may confidently hope for the redress of their grievances, &c. ‡.

It is plain that this learned personage has *thought* a great deal upon the subject, and I have good reason to think that he has not confined himself to *thoughts* upon it, and yet it is equally plain that he is extremely ill-informed concerning it.—Have then the catholic clergy desired a form of ecclesiastical government in the spirit of rivalry, and in defiance of the established clergy? Which clergy is the more ancient? Do they withhold any honour, title, possession, or revenue which the law has attributed to the latter? Do they require, or even receive tithes from their own people? Do they exhort them not to pay, or rather do not they exhort them to pay these (ill as they can afford to pay them) to the tithe-proctor? Do even our catholic bishops object to pay their own tithes to the person whom the law has appointed to receive them. — But our "hierarchy "is a distinct and firm government, &c." What, Sir, because the legislature has thought proper

\* Speech, p. 25. † P. 27. ‡ P. 34.



to imitate the wisdom of our hierarchy in its ecclesiastical government, must we lay it aside? Because you choose to be episcopalians, must we become presbyterians? It was the great St. Patrick who established this apostolical form of government throughout his spiritual conquest of Ireland 1400 years ago, and above 1100 before protestancy existed; and it is the glory of the Irish Catholics that it has continued without the interruption of a day the same and unaltered from that remote period down to the present time. Afflicted, as they have been beyond all other christian nations, the virginal purity of their first faith has never been sullied, nor has the succession of their pastors ever been lost; notwithstanding the furious ravages of the Danes, the oppressive tyranny of the Plantagenets, and the long unrelenting, but little known persecutions of Elizabeth and the Stuarts\*. When

\* Every writer has recorded, and every man, woman, and child is informed of the persecution exercised by Queen Mary upon the Protestants of England (for those of Ireland remaining quiet were never molested by her). In the mean time few persons have heard of the more severe, extensive, and lengthened persecution exercised by Elizabeth and her successors on the English Catholics, and still fewer have heard of that which the Irish Catholics had to suffer during the reigns in question. The names and history of about 200 of the former who were put to death by Elizabeth, *for the profession or exercise of their religion*, are upon record. But though it is certain that many more Irish Catholics suffered death during her reign on the same account, I have not yet been able to recover the names of more than between forty and fifty of them. Amongst these were six prelates: Patrick O'Kelly, Bishop of Mayo, Dermot O'Hurle, Archbishop of Cashel, Richard Creagh, Archbishop of Armagh,



that vain and sacrilegious female required, upon pain of death, to be acknowledged as "the Supreme Governess of the Church of Christ throughout all her dominions."\* The conscientious Irish prelates acted the same part with their brethren in England †. They gave back to

and Edmund Magauran his successor, Cornelius O'Duane, Bishop of Down, and Edmund O'Gallagher, Bishop of Derry. The two first of these suffered horrible tortures previously to their execution; the former having his legs broken with hammers, and needles thrust under his finger nails, the other being obliged to wear, for several days, jack boots containing a quantity of quick lime and oil. The common stretching rack was very frequently employed against the catholic prisoners, and it was not unusual to tear the nails from their fingers, or to batter the shaven crowns of the clergy with sticks and stones till their brains appeared. The year before Elizabeth's death a number of monks and clergy, amounting in all to 51 persons, obtained permission, in consequence of a petition to her which they got presented, to retire to the continent, and a Queen's ship was appointed to convey them. They embarked, as they were ordered, at Slattery, but they had not sailed far when they were all thrown into the sea and drowned. The Queen pretended to be greatly incensed at the proceeding, and commanded the Captain and officers of the ship to be confined. This however was only an artifice of this hypocritical and remorseless princess, as the tragedy had been performed by her orders. Accordingly the officers were afterwards rewarded with lands which had belonged to the aforesaid monks, some of whom left descendants in the possession of them when my author wrote this account. It will easily be conceived that a much greater number of Irish Catholics, chiefly clergy, were put to death for their religion under the first Stuarts and the Usurpation, when it is known that I have collected the names of forty-two priests of the Dominican order alone, besides four bishops and two nuns, who lost their lives on this account between the years 1608 and 1657.

\* See the Act of Supremacy, 1 Eliz. cap. 1. The celebrated Lutheran Doctor Chemnitius complains of Elizabeth: "quod famineo fastu Papissam et Caput Ecclesiæ Christi ce fecisset."

† All the English bishops were deprived of their sees, and com-



the state all they held from it; their possessions, their mansions, their honours, their churches, and their tithes. But with respect to their orders and their spiritual jurisdiction, as these did not descend from the civil power, so neither could they possibly be surrendered to it.

To place this matter in another point of view, I presume that even Lord Redesdale will admit the maxim (which was universally allowed a few years ago when Mr. Horne Tooke endeavoured to be admitted into the House of Commons), namely, *that once a priest or bishop and always a priest or bishop*. Indeed he must absolutely allow the validity of our orders, or he will be forced to confess that his own clergy are not rightly ordained. In a word, the law does explicitly admit of our orders, since it allows our bishops or priests upon merely taking the oaths to hold the temporalities of any bishopric or benefice to which he may be named, without any further ceremony. It being then indisputable that his Lordship's acquaintance, Dr. Coppinger, for example, is a true bishop, both in law and in fact, and that he has been consecrated to exercise episcopal functions for the Catholics of Cloyne, I should be glad to know upon what principle of common sense it can be denied that he is the catholic Bishop of Cloyne. Not long since his Lordship maintained with

mitted to prison during their lives for refusing the oath, except Kitchen of Llandaff, whom all allow to have been a most worthless prelate.



equal positiveness, that the law did not acknowledge the existence of a catholic *parish priest*, until the above-mentioned bishop convinced him of his mistake, by referring to the Act of Parliament in which this character is recognized. But to make an end of this matter, it is clear that the law has admitted the profession and practice of the catholic religion, which religion is universally known to be episcopalian; that it has recognized the existence of our clergy, who can only be proved to be such by the certificate of their bishops; and that it has even founded an ecclesiastical seminary to prepare students for ordination at the hands of catholic bishops within the realm, and constituted these bishops, in conjunction with the crown officers, superiors of this seminary: can any thing be more inconsistent than to represent the catholic episcopacy as standing in defiance of the law!

I say nothing of the advantages to the state from the episcopal form of government amongst its catholic subjects in preference to every other, nor of the gross misrepresentations of it in its actual condition, which occur in the aforesaid speech, as these have been already so ably exposed by two catholic prelates, the ornaments of their order\*. I shall therefore conclude with

\* See the Appendix No. IV. and V. to the Substance of Additional Observations intended to have been delivered in the House of Commons, &c. by Sir J. C. Hippisley, Bart. &c.



observing, that if the noble and learned Lord alluded to should ever succeed in his favourite object of getting a law passed for destroying the catholic prelacy in Ireland, he will not stand in need of a single file of soldiers to enforce it: all that will be necessary for him to provide will be a sufficient store of halters or guillotines; as it is certain that all the catholic bishops are prepared to shed their blood (but not till they have imposed their hands upon successors who may perpetuate the hierarchy) rather than renounce their order and spiritual jurisdiction. I will add, that the catholic clergy and pious laity in general are equally well disposed to surrender their lives in the same cause.

I have the happiness, Sir, of being well acquainted with the venerable and amiable successor of St. Patrick's spiritual jurisdiction in the see of Armagh, and it is not irrelevant to the subject I have been treating of, to take notice of the only material property which he appears to have derived from his predecessors:—it is the head of one of them, a saint by the tenor of his life, and a martyr in the cause of his death\*. His name was Dr. Oliver Plunket, and he was put to death in consequence of that sanguinary conspiracy against the religion and loyalty of the Catholics which was hatched by the crafty

\* Even Bishop Burnet, who, amongst all his lies, never told one in favour of a Catholic, gives Dr. Plunket an excellent character, both as a subject and a man. Hist. of his own Times.



and sanguinary Ahitophel\*, Lord Shaftsbury, and his associates the Rev. Dr. Tongue and Rev. Dr. Oates, the last-mentioned of whom has given his name to the infamous plot. It is needless to say, that the pious archbishop might have saved his life by renouncing his religion, and giving a colour to the plot; but, as he had lived, so he died an innocent and pious catholic bishop, and a faithful and affectionate subject of his king and country. Not so the inveterate enemy of the catholic name, the arch-traitor Shaftsbury. He was soon after detected in the very crime which he had, with diabolical falseness and cruelty, imputed to the Catholics, a real plot to assassinate his sovereign and destroy the constitution. He escaped with his life to Holland; but the divine justice overtook him, and he speedily died there a wretched and unlamented death, leaving Sydney and Russel, and many others, comparatively innocent, to expiate his crimes on the scaffold.

My venerable friend recollects an acquaintance of his in his younger days, who was with a former successor of Archbishop Plunket at his house, when an emaciated old man, with a tottering gait, and looks bespeaking horror, entered the room where they were sitting, and exclaimed: "Am I  
" never to have peace? Is there no mercy for  
" me?"——It was Duffy, a censured priest, and

\* This is the character which he bears in Dryden's admired poem of Absolom and Ahitophel.



one of Lord Shaftsbury's suborned witnesses against the venerable archbishop. The living prelate made no direct answer, but moving from his chair and opening a glass case, repeated in a deep tone: "Look here, you unfortunate wretch:" when instantly the old man fell to the ground in a swoon. The object which he then exhibited to the perjured wretch, was that head of his holy primate which he had caused to be struck off. I learn, however, that Duffy appearing to be truly contrite, was at length admitted to the reconciliation with the Church which he so earnestly petitioned for. The head of Archbishop Plunket is entire, and preserves those features which are so well known from the pictures and prints of him, now so common.

I have the honour, &c.

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## LETTER VI.

*Dublin, July 8, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

I Have now surveyed the places most worthy of notice in the environs of this



capital. I have made the tour of the Circular Road, so called because it surrounds the city, which exhibits in different parts the most interesting views of it, as likewise of the harbour, the bay, and the neighbouring country. I have ridden round Phoenix Park, which for hill and dale, luxuriant thicket and verdant sod, pure air and variegated prospect ; in short, for every advantage, except lofty and spreading trees, is far superior to Hyde Park and St. James's Park put together. I have skirted the bottom of the Wicklow mountains, and viewed the gay villas and plantations in the neighbourhood of Dunderum and the Black Rock, which latter is washed by the flowing tide, and is the favourite resort of the citizens of Dublin. Amongst other villas, I saw that of Kilmacud, the parting with which drew tears down the stern countenance of its dignified proprietor as he sat on his bench, when he found himself ordered back to England. I was told, that if he knew the fate of his favourite residence, now turned into a catholic boarding-school, it would cause him to shed tears again. But I have already intimated, that I did not come into this island to survey its beauties, natural or artificial, but to form an acquaintance with its inhabitants. Hence, having paid some attention to the particular character of the Catholic Clergy here, I am now intent on studying that of the Catholic people in general.

It would betray great ignorance of human nature, to expect to meet with exclusive qualities,



whether good or bad, in any people whomsoever, or in either sex. All mankind afford proof both of the beauty of God's work and of the deformity of human passions. They have all a mixture of selfishness and compassion, of sensuality and modesty, of vanity and a love of truth. The more or less of these different qualities in the greater number of a people or a sex, is what constitutes its character; in judging of which, however, we are very liable to be deceived by adventitious circumstances, or preconceived prejudices.

The vulgar English are persuaded that the Irish are a stupid misconceiving people, and many degrees below themselves in every mental faculty. This prejudice, which is chiefly owing to the poverty and depression of the latter (for persons of superior fortune naturally suppose themselves possessed of superior understanding) is confirmed by the mistakes which the illiterate Irish are apt to make, as other nations make, when they express themselves in a language not their own; by the buffoonery of the stage, and the peculiar pride, I must say so, of a people who think all the rest of Adam's children throughout the world, are vastly inferior to themselves in every valuable endowment. It is agreed, however, amongst intelligent and liberal observers, that the Irish are both remarkably quick and remarkably clear in their conceptions, and that they acquire sciences and arts in less time than the English do. But they are probably behind-hand



with our countrymen in intense application, to gain a perfect knowledge and mastery of the science or art that is to be attained, and in that depth of judgment which is perhaps their characteristic. Possibly it is to this circumstance, more than to any other, that the present difference in political situations between the inhabitants of our two islands is owing. For, next to the omnipotent decrees of Providence, it is depth of judgment which regulates the destiny of the world. Owing to the quickness and clearness of their ideas, and a corresponding quickness of feeling, the Irish, in general, possess a more ready and animated utterance, and, of course, are naturally better formed for oratory in any language which they well possess, than our countrymen are. You, Sir, never had the advantage which was for some time mine, of frequently hearing, in public debate as well as in private conversation, the enchanting and commanding Irish Tully, the great Edmund Burke. But what is it that this country does not owe to his eloquence! To form a right judgment on this head, look back to that part of its history which corresponds with the early part of the French revolution. You will observe that many of the most illustrious characters of this nation were then so besotted with the congenial sounds of revolution and liberty, that in hailing the overthrow of a foreign government, they nearly brought about the destruction of their own. They stood, blind and unconscious of danger, on the brink of a



precipice, and did not see the torrents of blood which already began to flow beneath it, and which, at the command of Robespierre, soon after swelled to a deluge; when the immortal Burke, by vast and repeated exertions of those talents with which God had blessed him, and at the expense of whatever was most dear to him in this world (as I well know) succeeded in tearing the veil from the eyes of an adverse ministry and a beguiled legislature, and thereby enabled them to consult their own and the nation's safety. Here was a triumph of eloquence which no orator ever enjoyed before or since. But if you cannot now hear the enchanting Burke, you may hear his countrymen, the prompt and copious Sheridan, the pointed and sublime Grattan. I never witnessed any speaker command so much attention in the House of Commons, or receive such universal and unbounded applause as the last mentioned did when he spoke on the catholic question two years ago : yet it is certain he has never put forth half those powers of his oratory on your side of St. George's channel, which he has repeatedly displayed on this side of it \*. Why he should restrain them is to me a subject of regret, both for the credit of his country and the sake of his cause.

Whatever difference of opinion there may be concerning the qualities of the Irish head, I think

\* A selection of Mr. Grattan's most brilliant speeches may be met with in Plowden's History of Ireland, vol. iii,



there is none concerning those of the Irish heart. The feelings of this people are universally allowed to be quick, warm, and generous. Hence they are, of all others, the most easy to be won with kindness, the most susceptible of friendship, and the most hospitable to every kind of guest. I must add (what may appear strange when we read history) they have, from the most distant period, entertained the greatest possible respect and affection for the English nation, notwithstanding the frequent and atrocious injuries they have received from it. So much easier is it, according to the doctrine of a great master of human nature, to forgive an injury received than an injury inflicted\*! Bede is a witness beyond all exception, of the partiality of the Irish for the English in past ages†; and any Englishman who will shew them common justice and humanity will experience that this continues at the present day.

I have spoken of their hospitality, which indeed is extolled by all writers who treat of their character; but it is impossible to form a conception of the extent to which this is carried, without experiencing it. I will here mention one instance of it, because it is universal, and because from circumstances it is not susceptible

\* "Proprium est humani generis odisse quem læseris." Tacit.

† "A. D. 684, Egfridus Nordhumbroꝝ Rex, misso in Hiberni-  
am, cum exercitu, duce Berto, vastavit miserè GENTEM IN-  
" NOXIAM ET NATIONI ANGLORUM SEMPER AMICIS-  
" SIMAM." Bed. Hist. l. iv. c. 26.



of ostentation. I dare say, Sir, you have wondered what becomes of those crowds of women and children, belonging to soldiers who have been sent abroad, and of the other poor whom you see constantly returning from different parts of England, to their native country, Ireland; especially as you know there are no poor rates in that island, nor any other legal provision for the support of the indigent. The fact is, the charity and hospitality of the people supersede the necessity of poor laws. Every cottage is open to each poor person who chooses to enter into it. There the stranger fares as the family fare, and there he or she is sheltered from the weather, and reposes upon as good a couch as they themselves do.

You will perhaps accuse me of drawing a flattering portrait of the poor calumniated Irish: hear, then, what other late writers of acknowledged talents and character, and to whom you will not attribute the same motives of partiality which perhaps you ascribe to me. "Every un-  
 " prejudiced traveller," says the celebrated Arthur Young, " who visits Ireland, will be as  
 " much struck and pleased with the cheerful-  
 " ness, as obliged by the hospitality of the inha-  
 " bitants, and will find them a brave, polite,  
 " liberal, learned, and ingenious people\*."—  
 " It is well known," says another intelligent philosophic writer, " that many Englishmen who  
 " went to Ireland teeming with contempt and de-

\* Tour to Ireland, vol. ii.



“testation of the people of that country, after a few  
 “years association with them, have returned to  
 “their own with a disposition to become, on all  
 “occasions, their strenuous encomiasts\*.” The  
 same accurate observer justly celebrates “The  
 “excessive hospitality of the Irish, their native  
 “good humour, their boundless charity, their  
 “uniform readiness to oblige and assist, their  
 “uncommon propensity to commiseration, &c.†”  
 But I have run to the length of my paper, and  
 therefore remain, for the present,

Yours, &c.

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## LETTER VII.

*Dublin, July 8, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

**DO** not fancy that I am the blind  
 and unqualifying panegyrist of the Irish. I can  
 see their faults as well as their good qualities.

\* Essays on the Population of Ireland, and The Character of the  
 Irish by a Member of the last Irish Parliament, p. 41.

† Essays, &c. p. 47.



Indeed, there is no good quality or virtue which, without prudence and fortitude, will not lead us into a sort of congenial fault or vice. Thus the quickness and warmth of sentiment which I have ascribed to this people, dispose them to be more susceptible of affronts and injuries, and more violent in their resentment than others who are more cool and phlegmatic. This disposition evidently tends to produce frequent broils amongst the lower order of them, and numerous duels amongst those of higher rank. I am told that this most absurd and inhuman practice is become less common in Ireland than it used to be : certainly it is more common in England than it was heretofore. But since in both countries it is, alas ! too frequent, and since it is considered as indispensable with respect to certain cases in that military life to which you, Sir, have now devoted yourself for the defence of your country, friendship induces me to give you my thoughts upon it, in the hopes, under God, of withdrawing you from a most criminal disposition of mind, in which, I fear, you are at present habitually living. My thoughts naturally turn to this subject, whilst I hear every one around me lamenting the premature end of the amiable and peaceable Mr. Colclough, the popular candidate for Wexford, lately killed in a duel.

Supposing, then, Sir, you set no great store by your life, in as much as it is *your own*, and that, in consequence, you are ready to expose it rather than put up with an affront or injury, yet



can you forget that your king and country have a claim upon it; both as a citizen, capable of rendering them service, and as a soldier, sworn to devote your life to their cause? By exposing yourself then to death, in order to avenge your own private wrong, you are guilty of a much greater injury to your king and country, than if you had attempted to rob the public treasury, in as much as a good citizen and soldier is of more value to them than a sum of money.

But, moreover, you have a parent, a wife, and three young children, who have each of them the strongest claim to your protection, support, and love. What a crying injustice, what an unnatural barbarity would it not be, to reject these claims, and rather than lose a mistaken point of honour for yourself, to expose your dearest connections to a real and irreparable loss! But it is not only the loss of certain advantages you would expose them to, in the case supposed, but also the positive and irremediable misery you draw down upon them. For, O! what heart-breaking grief must overwhelm that parent, that wife, and those children, when the news first reaches them that you have come to an untimely end! that you have died in the actual transgression of every law human and divine! Must not their countenances, from that day forward, be marked with sorrow and confusion? Must not tears and horror be the portion of their future lives?—O! think of your mother, your wife and your children, when you are affronted by a giddy



comrade, or are challenged to fight a duel. O ! think you owe more to them, than to the erring opinion of the world.

Independently, however, of these considerations, remember you are a Christian; that is to say, a disciple of him who has made the forgiveness of injuries (great as well as little, for there is no distinction) the characteristic of those who belong to him, and who, to confirm his doctrine by his example, died praying for the wretches who were shedding his blood. By consenting to a duel, you abjure his gospel in its most essential point: you consent to the murder of your brother, and to his murdering you, not knowing which of the two events may follow. Should you die under the guilt of self-murder, (for self-murder it is when you deliberately go out to receive the ball of your adversary) what must be your surprise and horror the moment after death, when your spirit finds itself in the regions of eternity ! When it rushes into the presence of its tremendous Judge, uncalled for by him, and polluted with the foulest guilt ! O ! daring wretch, if God is infinitely just and true, you must be everlastingly miserable !—“ And what will it avail you,” says Tertullian, “ to be extolled as a man of honour where you are not, and to be tormented where you are ? ” —I will suppose, however, that you come off victorious in the contest, which is to say, that you have murdered your fellow Christian, and sent him, in the circumstances above described,



to meet his Judge: can you have peace in your breast after this? Will not you henceforward be for ever weighing in your mind the loss of his life, the misery of his relatives, the fate of his immortal soul, with the affront he has unguardedly offered you? Probably you flatter yourself with the hopes of avoiding the guilt and misery here described, by keeping yourself out of the danger of being called upon to fight a duel. But remember, that as to *the guilt* in question, you are habitually living in it before the Searcher of Hearts, and that you will hereafter be judged by him according to it, while you are living *in a disposition of mind to fight a duel in any circumstances whatsoever.*

Many persons, or rather most persons, admit to a certain degree the sinfulness as well as the absurdity of duelling. They lament that such a practice should prevail; but alledge that it is better for a man of spirit to submit to it, than to pass for a coward. This is, in fact, to say, that it is better to be a coward, than to pass for one. Thus the poor mistaken Lucretia submitted to contract the guilt of adultery, when she found that otherwise her memory would be stained with the infamy of it; whilst the truly virtuous Susannah\*, in the same circumstances, preferred the infamy of the crime to the crime itself. In fact, I maintain that the man who cannot brave the erroneous opinion of the world, as well as every

\* See Daniel c. xiii. in the Vulgate.



other calamity in the discharge of his duty, is thus far a coward; and, indeed, his own heart tells him that he is so. The true hero is disposed to part with his reputation, as well as his life, rather than perpetrate a base or bad action \*. It was a blind superstitious notion, repeatedly censured by the Catholic Church, and generally belied by the issue of the greater part of duels, namely, that "God is obliged to interpose for the protection of the injured party," which first gave rise to this barbarous practice. The heroes of Greece and Rome, and the renowned chieftains of Christendom, in early times, could settle such disputes without murdering one another, and they did not think that even a blow was that atrocious injury which nothing but blood could expiate †.

But it is the legislature alone which can put an effectual stop to this destructive malady.—O! for an intelligent and active member of either House of Parliament, who is ambitious of glory by saving the lives of his fellow citizens, or who is touched with compassion for the still re-

- \* "Justum et tenacem propositi virum
- "Non CIVIUM ARDOR PRAVA JUBENTIAM
- "Non vultus instantis tyranni
- "Mente quatit solida."

Horat. l. iii.

† When the great Athenian general, Themistocles, was struck at the council board by Eurybiades, a brother officer, he coolly answered: ΠΑΤΑΞΟΝ ΜΕΝ ΑΚΟΥΣΟΝ ΔΕ.



curing distress of parents, wives, and children; or who is inflamed with true zeal to prevent the accumulation of moral guilt! Such a one would certainly accomplish the great work wanted, though Mr. Wilberforce once abandoned it in despair\*. But have we not laws already, it will be said, and those sufficiently severe, against the practice of duelling? Would you add any thing to the rigour of capital punishment, which already is in force against it?—I answer, the laws in this case are severe enough, and too severe, which is the very cause why they are ineffectual. Whilst the laws make no distinction between a successful duellist and a common murderer, (the prejudice of the people, which attaches a kind of honour to duelling, remaining such as it is) they never will answer any other purpose than to involve unfortunate juries in the guilt of perjury, and cause the blood of the wretched victims of fashion to flow on from one generation to another. To lay a proper restraint upon duellists, let them be attacked in their honour and property: let all funeral honours whatsoever, and even the claim of being interred in a common burying-ground, be interdicted with respect to the body of the person who falls in a duel; and let the surviving duellist be declared incapable of serving his country in the lowest rank whatever.

\* Mr. Wilberforce gave notice of a new bill against duelling, which he intended to introduce into parliament in consequence of the duel between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Tierney.



Let one half also of his property or income, as rated by a jury, be forfeited, or at least sequestered for his life. With these prescriptions, I would venture to affirm we should not hear of a duel within these dominions in the course of five years. Such laws would be acted upon by a jury, should the occasion require it, and they would be productive of their intended effect. For do not we find that the mere binding over of parties under a pecuniary penalty prevents duels? In a word, humiliation and degradation are the proper remedy for a vice which originates in pride and vanity.

I am, &c.

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## LETTER VIII.

*Tullow, July 10, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

HOWEVER agreeable my residence in and about the capital had been to me for some days past, yet I grew impatient to see



and become acquainted with the interior parts of the island. I accordingly set off from Dublin yesterday morning, and after viewing some ruined churches, castles, and round towers, &c. on the road, I stopped to breakfast at Naas, in the county of Kildare, about 15 Irish miles in a south-west direction from the metropolis. It was there I first observed those wide-extended ruins of houses and cabins, which disfigure so many other towns as well as Naas, owing to the blind fury of the yeomen and king's officers during the rebellion of 1798, who destroyed every habitation in which they found arms, or suspected that arms might be concealed, or whose masters were absent from home. A barbarous and fatal policy, by which a great many repentant rebels were forced to support the cause in which they had hastily engaged; and many other innocent men were driven to join the rebellion, as their only resource in the circumstances to which they were then reduced. Most of the chapels in that neighbourhood, and throughout the county of Wexford, to the amount of near fifty, were wantonly demolished by the military on the same occasion. These have since been rebuilt at the expense of government; but the ruins of the dwelling-houses, which frequently extend from one end of a long street to another, and cover whole quarters of a town\*, still re-

\* An English Gentleman of the highest honour, who was in Ireland during the rebellion, mentions his having heard officers boast



main to attest the misconduct of both parties during the rebellion.—In traversing the plains of Kildare, and viewing the huge perpendicular stones which every where seem to grow out of them, I comprehended the reason why our ancient chroniclers assign this part of Ireland as the place from which the British enchanter Merlin transported the *Choir of Giants*, as Stonehenge was anciently called \*, to the neighbourhood of Amesbury.

I arrived at the town from which this letter is dated yesterday in the afternoon, upon a visit to a respectable friend of mine who is much known and as generally beloved throughout this country. During my short stay here, as well as during the past fortnight in other places, I have remarked and admired the sense of piety and zeal for religion, which always has been the most distinguishing character of the Irish †. This, I know, you and other Englishmen call *superstition*. But what is superstition?

that they had “burnt down whole villages at a time, as the shortest “ way of destroying whatever arms might be concealed in any part of “ them.” See a Letter to the Archbishops and Bishops of England and Ireland, by Philip Howard, Esq.

\* See Silvester Giraldus, *Topogr. Hib.* l. xi. c. 18. Mat. West, ad An. 490, &c.

† Floddoard, a French writer in the tenth century, says of Ireland: “Omnibus vicinis gentibus fide præpollet.” Vita St. Helleni. Baronius, Bozius, Surius, Benedict XIV. and other writers of the first authority, testify to the same effect with respect to later ages.



- “ Ask : Where’s the North ? At York ’tis on the  
 “ Tweed ;  
 “ In Scotland at the Orcades ; and there,  
 “ At Greenland, Zembla, or the Lord knows where\*.”

You Church Protestants reproach us with superstition, because we often sign ourselves with the sign of the cross, (though not half so often as the first Christians did †,) and because we bless holy water. The Dissenters reproach you with superstition, because you sign your children with this sign in baptism, and because you bless earth, buildings, and military ensigns ‡. The Quakers reproach the Dissenters with superstition, in pretending to bless one particular class for the exercise of the ministry §. The fashionable religionists of the day, the Deists, reproach all descriptions of Christians with superstition, in pretending to any revealed mode of blessing at all. I say this, Sir, to prevent your assuming as a fact, the question, upon which you are not yet qualified to form an adequate idea. If you will single out any particular tenet or practice of our religion which you think superstitious, I will undertake to refer you to a score or more learned priests of my acquaintance on this side of the water, any one of

\* Essay on Man, Book ii.

† Tertullian, who lived in the second century, describes the Christians as signing themselves with the cross on almost every occurrence of their lives.

‡ See De Laune’s Plea, &c.

§ Barclay’s Apology.



whom shall give you complete satisfaction upon it in convincing letters, that shall also prove the writer to have received a good education ; or, if you should decline this correspondence, I am sure you will be satisfied by reading Bossuet's *Exposition of the Catholic Faith*, or Bishop Challoner's *Catholic Christian Instructed*, with his *Grounds of the Old Religion*.

I know, Sir, that you have a particular objection to the ceremonies of our Church, which you are accustomed to term "cumbersome, superstitious, and destructive of true devotion." — Without going far into the matter, remember that the Dissenters bring the very same objection against your Church, and that our religious ceremonies are not a tenth part so numerous or cumbersome as those of the ancient people of God were, which nevertheless were minutely prescribed by the Almighty himself \*. I grant you, that ritual ceremonies and exterior observances are not of themselves devotion; but reason and experience prove them to be highly beneficial in exciting it ; just as the leaves of a tree are not the fruit, and yet they are necessary for the formation, the growth, and the preservation of the fruit.

In like manner I am aware that many of our English Catholics, who agree with me on the subject of religious ceremonies in general, are unjust to their brethren, the Catholics of Ire-

\* See the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, &c.



land, in supposing that, for want of proper instruction, they place too much confidence in exterior observances. These persons should reflect on the caution which the great O'Leary gives, "not to judge of the Irish by St. Giles's or Wapping, but to go and see them in their own country \*." In fact, the only equitable way of forming an idea of a people, is to view them in their own country and in the mass. Were any nation to be judged of by its emigrants (as for example, our own by the adventurers and swindlers who formerly crowded Boulogne, Calais, and Dunkirk), it would evidently be the height of injustice as well as folly. In opposition then to this prejudiced opinion, I can take upon myself to say, that the Irish Catholics are as well instructed as the English are, not to trust to any things, as the conditions of salvation, but the merits of Christ, and their keeping the commandments. It is true, indeed, speaking of them in general, and as a people, that they are strict in observing the precepts of the Church as to fasting, abstinence, prayer, and the sacraments, but this every Catholic must commend. Thus no distance of place, no badness of the road, or of the weather, prevents them from attending divine worship on the days prescribed; and if, as is frequently the case, there is not a

\* The Rev. Arthur O'Leary's Address to the Lords Spiritual and Temporal.



roof to shelter them under whilst this worship is performed, they will stand the freezing blast and the pelting storm, till that duty is complied with. The chapels in the towns are crowded on working days, as well as upon Sundays and festivals, and the behaviour of the people, during the service, bespeaks their faith and devotion: certainly it was a subject of edification to me. I may add, that I seldom was present at a mass on any day on which several persons did not communicate. Another circumstance edified me in this people, and would have edified me if I had been of a communion different from theirs, I mean a vein of morality and religion which seasons their discourses. Instead of those horrid oaths and curses which interlard and eke out the language of our English labouring poor, wherever we hear it, in the streets or upon the roads, my ears are now habituated to the language of piety amongst the lowest orders of the people. Thus, for example; a poor blind man being relieved by me, he expressed his gratitude in the following prayer: "May God grant you a holy life and a happy death." On a similar occasion a poor woman returned thanks in these terms: "May health, wealth, and heaven be given to you."

It is not, Sir, the consequence of superstition and bigotry, as witlings have pretended, but of nature and reason, that those who love and respect religion should also love and respect its



ministers. Accordingly the Irish Catholics are, and always have been, remarkable for this behaviour towards their clergy. I have observed it, with pleasure, in the opulent and noble as well as in the lowly and the indigent. But then to speak the truth, the clergy, in general, support the credit of their station, and perform their duty, which, in fact, is to render themselves worthy of such treatment. It is impossible, Sir, for you to form a judgment of the labours of a vigilant priest in Ireland, who has to attend, perhaps, five thousand parishioners, spread over a district of probably nine or ten miles in circumference, unless you were acquainted with all the several duties of our ministry: still you may easily conceive that the whole life of such a pastor must be devoted to them. The first of these is to wait on the sick. Every priest then must be at all times ready to attend to each sick person in his parish, however poor and abject, and however loathsome and infectious the disorder may be under which the patient labours. He must be ready to set off in all weathers, and at all hours of the night as well as of the day, to administer the comforts and benefits of our religion in question: and it is a fact that very few Catholics die without such consolation and assistance. In a word, the people who are accustomed to call their priest by the endearing name of *father*, know and feel that they have a true father in him, one who is ready to render them every service in his power,



temporal as well as eternal, and to face death itself in the discharge of his spiritual duties towards them. No wonder then they should experience the reverence and affection of children towards him.—It appears that certain members of the legislature are determined upon obliging the established clergy of Ireland to reside on their benefices, and to read prayers in their empty churches, with the view of bringing over the people to their religion. Depend upon it, Sir, the catholic clergy laugh at this proposal. They say : “ We shall be glad if the dignitaries were  
 “ to come amongst us, because then our poor  
 “ people would get rid of the tithe-proctors. On  
 “ the other hand, unless these gentlemen should  
 “ take more pains and shew more disinterested-  
 “ ness than we do ; unless they should be willing  
 “ to meet us in the smoaky and poisonous cabin,  
 “ no less than in controversial debate, our con-  
 “ gregations will never be the thinner for their  
 “ presence.”

This good understanding and natural union between the catholic clergy and laity of Ireland, has happily been such as to baffle those attempts of a learned Lord, the old and unrelenting enemy of the catholic name, which heretofore had too much success amongst us Catholics of England. Accordingly he reproaches, in severe terms, the catholic nobility and gentry of Ireland with being less enlightened, less liberal, and less I know not what, than Catholics of the same rank



in England \*. Happily the Irish are not disposed to be guided by this nobleman in any matter whatever regarding their religion. And, thank God! the English likewise have lately so behaved themselves, as to merit his equal censure, if, what we are told is true, that he has pronounced "the English Catholics (all, except a few) to be "as bad as the Irish †." You will be surprised, Sir, that I should describe a personage who is supposed to have procured for us the important advantages of the law of 1791, as "the old and "unrelenting enemy of the catholic name." To this I answer, first, that the *Act of Parliament made Mr. M. not Mr. M. the Act of Parliament*. The important change which had just taken place in France, where Catholics, and Catholics alone, were slaughtered in thousands by the implacable enemies of England, the increasing liberality and political wisdom of the nation, joined to its experience of the spirit of their enemies in the riots of 1780, imperiously called for the relaxation of the penal laws, and things were already in such a train for the success of the bill, previously to its being put into the hands of Mr. M. that any *Yea and Nay man* in either house could have carried it with as much ease as he did.

\* See the printed Correspondence between Lord Redesdale and the Earl of Fingal.

† See the Report of the late Speeches in the House of Lords on the affairs of Ireland.



Secondly, I say, that however most Catholics, on both sides of the channel, have changed their opinion concerning this nobleman, I never have had occasion to change mine. I heard his speech in March 1791, and I heard that which he delivered in May 1805 (to say nothing of his speeches, publications, and conduct at other times), and I assure you, Sir, I relished the latter speech better than I did the former, on the principle which makes every sensible man prefer an open enemy to a false friend. His object was the same on both occasions, to divide the Catholics into two parties, and particularly to set the laity against the clergy, for their mutual destruction. He was far, however, from having the same means of success, after he had thrown aside the visor as when he wore it. The advice which Lord R. gives the Catholics to join with him in pulling down their clergy, reminds us of the proposed treaty between the wolves and the sheep. "Nothing would be more easy," said the wolves, "than to keep peace with you, good sheep, if you would but turn out of your service those ill-bred barking dogs of yours."

I am, &c.



## LETTER IX.

*Kilkenny, July 12, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

LEAVING Tullow about noon, I proceeded to the county town of Carlow, pleasantly situated on the banks of the Barrow. Here I visited the spacious well built chapel, and the neat well regulated seminary adjoining to it; and I was much pleased and edified with what I observed at both places. My next stage was the city of Kilkenny, so called from St. Canicius, by contraction Kenny, a holy abbot of the sixth century, whose *cell*, or oratory, originally at Achadbho, in Queen's county, was afterwards removed hither\*. This was heretofore one of the most splendid and important places in Ireland. Its artificial beauties have decayed; the ancient monasteries and most of the other public buildings having been reduced to ruins, except the castle of the Ormond family, finely situated, but built in the Vandalic style, which supplanted the enchanting pointed order in the

\* A late writer, who on various occasions opposes his unfounded conjectures to the authority of all ancient records, and the judgment of all other modern authors, boldly advances that no such man as St. Canicius ever existed! Such is the latest fashion of attacking the original faith.



sixteenth century. The natural advantages, however, of Kilkenny are of such a nature as to bid defiance to the vicious taste and perversity of modern ages: for you must certainly, Sir, have heard the vulgar but true saying with respect to this city: "At Kilkenny they have earth without bog, air without fog, water without mud, and marble pavement that is good."—I have visited here the small but learned seminary of ecclesiastics, and the edifying convent of the Presentation, instituted by a pious citizen of Dublin for the education, in continued succession, of some hundreds of poor female children.

Having, in my last letter, treated of the religion of the Irish Catholics, my subject now leads me to say something of their morality; vulgar prejudices and obloquy, running still stronger against them on the latter than upon the former subject. The generality of our countrymen imagine that Ireland is a country in which it is not safe either to travel or to reside, and that its catholic population consists of robbers, assassins, and other wretches, dead to every sentiment of moral honesty and humanity. This prejudice of the nursery has been confirmed by the misrepresentations and fabrications of news writers, and other writers of Sir Richard Musgrave's description. These men frequently publish downright falsehoods against the Irish, as I myself have ascertained, and on all occasions they aggravate the real offences of this people, and suppress the injuries or grievances which have led to the com-



mission of them. Thus much, Sir, you may depend upon, and the records of the courts of justice will prove. That the number of capital convictions throughout Ireland, and more especially throughout the counties in which the Catholics are the most numerous, those of Kerry and Galway, during the last year, or the last three years, have not borne the least proportion with those throughout an equal extent of population in any part of England.

With such characteristical dispositions as the Irish are proved to possess, it is not in the nature of things that they should be, upon the whole, an immoral people; and yet I am prepared to meet with a great number of villains, and those of the most hardened class, amongst them, for these two reasons. First, experiences shews that there are a great many wretches of this description in every nation under the sun, no advantage of disposition or education being at all times able to stem the tide of human passions. Secondly, the example which the Irish have seen amongst our countrymen for ages past, the treatment which they have experienced at their hands, and the laws to which they have been subjected by them, have all been calculated to eradicate every moral and humane feeling from their breasts, and cannot but have produced a bad effect upon a certain number of them.



“ Padet hæc opprobria nobis  
 “ Et dici potuisse et non non potuisse refelli \*.”

To mount upwards two centuries, “Sir John  
 “Davies relates,” says the last historical writer  
 on the affairs of Ireland, “that in his time it  
 “was held no crime to kill a mere *Irishman* †.”—  
 “Whenever the Irish were mentioned in Acts of  
 “Parliament, it was to mark them out, not  
 “merely as enemies, but as being wholly out of  
 “the common rules of law and morality ‡.—The  
 “Irish were considered as a sort of rebel savages,  
 “excluded from the contemplation of the laws  
 “of God and man §.” The same intelligent and  
 liberal writer agrees with former writers ||, in  
 exposing and execrating the acts of alternate  
 frauds ¶ and violence practised by government  
 upon its Irish subjects for dispossessing them of  
 their property, and which prevailed from the  
 reign of Elizabeth, down to that last and never-  
 to-be-forgotten act of public perfidy, the in-

\* Ovid. *Metamorph.*

† *Historical Apology for the Catholics of Ireland*, by Henry  
 Parnel, Esq. p. 53.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 54.

§ *Ibid.* p. 98. This writer brings authority to prove, that  
 during Lord Mountjoy's administration, “No Irishman was par-  
 “doned unless he undertook to murder his nearest friend or  
 “relation,” p. 91.

|| See Dr. Curry's invaluable *Review of the Civil Wars in Ire-  
 land*, 2 vols. 8vo.

¶ The Apologist shews that the landholders in Connaught, after  
 being obliged to purchase from the crown titles to *their own estates*,  
 twice over, were at last dispossessed of them by Lord Strafford,  
 under the pretext of defective titles.



fraction of the treaty of Limerick\*. “This  
 “treaty,” say the Irish Catholics, “ratified and  
 “exemplified as it was by King William and  
 “Queen Mary under the Great Seal of England,  
 “and confirmed by Act of Parliament †, was our  
 “BILL OF RIGHTS, on the faith of which we  
 “surrendered, not only the city of Limerick,  
 “from which we had the year before driven King  
 “William, but likewise all the southern and  
 “western counties of Ireland; THE BILL OF  
 “RIGHTS, on the faith of which we renounced  
 “our allegiance to King James, till then our  
 “king *de jure* and *de facto*, and swore fidelity  
 “to King William. By the first article of  
 “this treaty, it was stipulated that, “*The*  
 “*Roman Catholics of this kingdom (Ireland),*  
 “*shall enjoy such privileges in the exercise of their*  
 “*religion as are consistent with the laws of Ire-*  
 “*land, or as they did enjoy in the reign of King*  
 “*Charles II. and their Majesties as soon as their*  
 “*affairs would permit them to summons a Parlia-*  
 “*ment in this kingdom, will endeavour to procure*  
 “*the said Roman Catholics such farther secu-*  
 “*rity in that particular as may preserve them*  
 “*from any disturbance upon account of their*

\* “That treaty,” says the Apologist, “remains a monument of  
 “the most flagrant perfidy that ever disgraced a nation: upon the  
 “faith of it the Irish Catholics gave up that power and influence,  
 “which you neither will nor can restore to them. And till that  
 “treaty is fulfilled in its most liberal sense, no ingenuity can re-  
 “move the stain of deliberate perjury from the character of the  
 “English nation.” Hist. Apol. p. 132.

† Viz. of the Irish Parliament in 1695.



*“said religion.”*—Yet no sooner were these articles thus ratified, than the bishops began to preach up, that *“peace ought not to be kept with a people so perfidious,”* as they calumniously described us to be\*, the doors of both Houses of Parliament were shut against us, which were open to us under Charles II. and more grinding laws were enacted against our religion than we had ever before experienced.

Not unlike these complaints respecting the treaty of Limerick are those relating to the Union. “Do not quibble with us,” the Irish Catholics say, “concerning terms and formalities, it was clearly understood between us that if we co-operated to bring about the Union, as we actually did, you would effect the emancipation. To give a colouring to this engagement, you inserted in the Articles of the Union an intimation of a proposed change of the oaths in our favour†: when, behold! now you roundly tell us, that this alteration never shall take place, and that we must make up our minds to wear our shackles till the end of time.”—Of a still more immoral tendency was the conduct of men in power, in their notorious connivance at the burning innumerable houses, and the banishing of their Catholic inhabitants

\* Dr. Dopping, Bishop of Meath, preached this before the Justices in Christ Church, Dublin. Harris’s Life of King William.

† In the fourth article of the Union it is enacted, that the qualifying oath shall remain, TILL PARLIAMENT SHALL OTHERWISE ORDAIN.



from the county of Armagh, practised there some twelve years ago \* ; as likewise the flaying and strangling, tortures so universally exercised upon men, not convicted even by a military tribunal of any crime, for the purpose of extorting confessions of guilt ; a practice as contrary to British law as it is to natural justice : all which horrors, with others still more flagitious, were afterwards hushed up by a general Act of Indemnity †. Such immoralities on the part of men in power, were the chief cause of the crimes committed by the people engaged in the subsequent rebellion. I must add, that the penal laws, as they existed till of late years, had a direct tendency to undermine every principle of religion, justice, and humanity. “By these,” says a late writer, “the entails of the estates of Catholics were broken, and they gavelled amongst their children. If one child abjured, he inherited, though he were the youngest: if

\* See the Address of Governor Lord Gosford to the assembled magistrates of Armagh, Dec. 26, 1795, in the Dublin Journal, and in Mr. Hay's *Insurrection of Wexford*, Appen. No. VII.—An outrage of a similar nature to those mentioned above is said to have happened in the same county within this twelvemonth, and that only one magistrate would receive the information of the man whose house was burned down. See a pamphlet called the *Correspondence of R. Wilson, Esq. &c.*—If the facts contained in that pamphlet be true, we may subscribe to the proverb which Mr. Parnel ascribes to the common people of Ireland, that “there is no law for a Catholic.”

† This Act was passed immediately after a Mr. Wright had recovered 500*l.* damages of Sheriff Judkin Fitzgerald for a most unjust as well as barbarous flaying of him.



“ the son abjured the catholic religion, the fa-  
 “ ther, though a purchaser, became a tenant for  
 “ life, whilst the son was tenant in fee. Children  
 “ were encouraged to betray parents and rebel  
 “ against them; brothers were opposed to bro-  
 “ thers, and even the ordinary duties of family  
 “ affection were prohibited as public crimes.”  
 Even now these unnatural laws are in full force  
 against persons, who have once abandoned the  
 catholic religion; though an unexceptionable  
 judge in these matters assures us, that such con-  
 versions of Catholics are insincere, and made  
 against their conscience. “ Notwithstanding,”  
 he says, “ the pains which persons, the best  
 “ qualified, have taken with persons, bred Ro-  
 “ manists, but conforming to the established  
 “ religion, and notwithstanding the honourable,  
 “ confidential, and lucrative appointments which  
 “ they have attained by this conformity; still  
 “ the leaven of popery remains, and at the un-  
 “ equivocal symptoms of approaching death, a  
 “ few half smothered symptoms of Christianity  
 “ were kindled in their breasts, and they have  
 “ uniformly died in the Romish persuasion\*.” In

\* See a Representation of the State of Ireland, &c. by Pat. Duigenan, LL. D. M. P. &c. pp. 8, 9. There are few persons acquainted with the history of this gentleman and his family, namely, that his father and mother returned to the catholic communion in the awful circumstances he has described, and that he himself was a Catholic. Who then will hesitate to pronounce that the Doctor is preparing a retreat for himself “ when the half smothered sparks of Chris-  
 “ tianity will be kindled in his breast” also! But the learned gentleman may carry the jest too far; and he ought to recollect,



the same spirit of immorality, priests are still encouraged by legal rewards to disobey their bishops and abandon their religion; who when they afterwards perform unlawful marriages, or commit other acts of immorality, the blame is uniformly thrown, not upon the law which cherishes them, but upon their church which censures them.

But to make an end of this inexhaustible matter, I ask what has been the conduct of government, and what is it still with respect to the poor Irish Catholics who engage and spend their lives in its service? Heretofore, they were cajoled to enlist into certain catholic regiments, so called, under promise of being allowed to practise their own religion, and not being required to attend any other. To render the deception more plausible, priests were hired as chaplains to these supposed catholic regiments; but no sooner were these compleated, than the priests were dismissed, and the soldiers drafted into different regiments, mostly in those stationed in the West Indies, where it was equally impossible for the poor men to practise their religion, or to claim the contract under which they enlisted. At present Irish soldiers are indulged in a certain degree of religious freedom in their own country; this, however, is far from being the universal case

what he learnt in his catholic catechism, not to place his confidence in acts of piety which are to be performed when "unequivocal symptoms of approaching death" shall appear.



even there; for no sooner are they removed thence, to defend some other part of the empire, than they are required, under pain of military punishment, (for that is the convincing argument) to lay aside their own religion, and to take up that of the establishment. But, Sir, when you have thus forced an Irishman to go to church, have you made a Protestant of him?—To satisfy yourself on this head, wait till the situation described by Dr. Duigenan arrives, namely, till “unequivocal symptoms of approaching death” shew themselves. You will then uniformly, and without exception, find these self-convicted conformists tortured with guilty horrors, and impatient for the presence of a priest, who may receive them back into the bosom of their native Church. What, then, have you effected by your intolerant laws and articles of war? You have not made Protestants, you have only made hypocrites! You have not promoted the cause of morality and religion in any point of view whatsoever, but you have essentially injured it! You have caused men to stifle the voice of their consciences, and you expect them to be examples of strict morality! You have induced them in their own full persuasion to abandon their God, and you expect them to be faithful to you!——I have run to a much greater length than I intended upon this subject; not, Sir, by way of recrimination or reproach, but to point out in the laws and governing powers of Ireland incitements and provocations to immo-



rality, which cannot but have produced their effect upon a considerable number of its inhabitants. Still these examples are by no means sufficiently numerous to affect the character of the Irish in general, and it is still, thank God, true to say of them, that they are at the same time a religious and a moral people.

I take no notice of the ancient calumnies of Silvester Giraldus, the most peevish and prejudiced of all our original writers\*; first, because these were evidently intended as an apology for the invasion of Ireland by the first Plantagenet, to whom he was a retainer; secondly, because these have been refuted by former writers†; thirdly, because they have been in a great measure retracted by the calumniator himself; and lastly, because they are, in their own nature, monstrous and incredible. To mention, then, later charges: “The Irish have been accused of perfidy,” says Newenham‡, who, however, rejects the accusation. Carr adds: “In no country in the world is treachery held in greater detestation than in Ireland, because in no region can be found a higher spirit of frankness and generosity§.”

\* As a proof of this disposition, he begins his account of Ireland with an apology for taking up a subject which he pretends is so contemptible, applying to it a scriptural text concerning Nazareth: “Ab Hiberniâ potest aliquid esse boni?”

† See Sir James Ware’s *Hist. and Antiquit.* c. 23. also Lynch in his *Cambrensis Eversus*.

‡ *Essays*, &c.

§ *Stranger in Ireland*, p. 149.



It has also been alledged, that they are “ destitute of a sense of equity \*.” This vague slander is met by clear and certain facts : “ A friend of mine,” says the ingenious author quoted above, “ in whose house there is seldom less than 1200L. or 1500L. in cash, surrounded with 200 or 300 poor peasants, retires at night to his bed without bolting a door or fastening a window †.” I myself observed that the houses, both in the towns and in the country, were very ill secured against nocturnal depredation, and that in the day time strangers appeared to enter into them without molestation, and to remain in them as long as they pleased ; which circumstance argues a great degree of confidence in each others honesty.—I have already mentioned the small number of capital convictions in Ireland, compared with those in England.

The Irish are also charged with drunkenness, and I am ready to allow that their cheerful and convivial temper, joined to the natural influence of the climate, disposes them to indulge in this vice. But after all, it is not by any means so common as in England, and most other countries under the same latitude ; the reason of which is, that the Irish are instructed and habituated to strive against this natural propensity. As a proof of this, you can hardly enter into conversation with a serious Irish Catholic on the subject of

\* Essays.

† Ibid.



drinking, who will not tell you of the oaths he has taken against it. The fact is, in order to break themselves of the habit of drinking to excess, they are accustomed to bind themselves by an oath not to taste of any inebriating liquor for a stated time; for example, during a month, three months, or half a year.—There are persons so carried away with prejudice, as to asperse the Irish character with the guilt of that other branch of sensuality; but no accusation can be more unjust. “The instances of connubial defection,” says the late tourist, “are fewer in Ireland, for its size, than in any other country of equal civilization, &c. The modesty of the Irish ladies is the effect of principle\*.—The low Irish are observant of sexual modesty, though crowded in the narrow limits of a cabin, and are strangers to a crime which reddens the cheek with horror.—They are not only remarkable for their early marriages, but for the inviolable sanctity with which the marriage contract is kept: hence, amongst other causes, the number and health of their children†.”

I have reserved the heaviest and most ordinary charge against the morality of Irish Catholics, and indeed of Catholics in general, that of habitual perjury, to be discussed in the last place. The liberal tourist, who has borne such honourable testimony to the virtues of the Irish

\* Carr, p. 236.

† Ibid. p. 405.



in other respects, appears to have given some countenance to this calumny by the manner in which he has described the prevarication of a couple of witnesses at two different trials at which he was present in Ireland; just as if he could attend any trial of importance in England, without witnessing equal prevarication on the part of more than two witnesses ! But to shew how far some English persons of respectable circumstances and situation are capable of carrying their prejudice : I know a person of that description, who has repeatedly and publicly declared, that “ the Irish are taught to believe there is no guilt “ in perjury, and that priests attend at the doors “ of the courts in Ireland, to absolve perjured “ witnesses as they return from them.” Good God ! when will these anti-catholic calumniators become so far rational, as to see that this particular accusation stands refuted and scouted by the actual visible situation of the party accused ! When will they acquire sense enough to see that Catholics have no occasion to petition parliament for a redress of their grievances, but that they have at all times a remedy for them in their own hands, if they could but reconcile it to their consciences to take a false oath. Surely these Papists could procure some priest, either for love or money, to absolve them ! or, what would be better, they might procure a general dispensation from the Pope for a little occasional perjury, which other people commit without any dispensation whatsoever ! They would thus obtain a great deal of wealth, influ-



ence, and power, which they might afterwards employ for the benefit of the Church, as well as for their own; and what would be more valuable to them than all this, by swearing contrary to their own conviction, they would vindicate their characters from the foul charge of perjury, and pass for honest men!—But, Sir, to be serious, I beg you will observe that the test oaths against Catholics have completely answered their purpose in keeping them out of parliament, benefices, and places, and in subjecting them to a thousand inconvenient and grinding laws. This incontestible and shining fact will for ever demonstrate the religion which Catholics attach to the obligation of oaths, and that their Church does not furnish them with any remedy for escaping from it. This incontestible shining fact will for ever confute and put to shame the calumnies of their enemies, many of whom are well known to have never refused an advantage which could be gotten by swearing. I have mentioned to you, Sir, that the test oaths, invented to keep Popery out of the state, have completely answered their purpose: but have those other oaths been equally effectual, which have been devised by the legislature to exclude heterodoxy from the established Church? or corruption from parliament? or smuggling from commerce? You are aware, Sir, what details I could furnish upon each of these heads: but I spare you the relation, on the condition that you never join the daring calum-



niators who have the front to reproach Catholics with the practice of perjury !

I am, &c.

## LETTER X.

*Kilkenny, July 13, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

TO attempt to answer, or even to notice the different writers who have publicly calumniated the religion and morals of the Irish Catholics would be an endless task : but there is one of them so distinguished by the virulence and grossness of his slanders, that I cannot help at least pointing him out, and giving you a specimen of his spirit, in a few extracts which I shall make from his ponderous libel, called, *A History of the different Rebellions in Ireland*. I was by no means surprised that a work of this complexion should have suffered the unprecedented disgrace of being rejected and



spurned at by the patron to whom it was inscribed\*. Judging of it, however, as I used to do, by extracts, and knowing the mischief it occasioned, I really wondered that no intelligent and spirited Irishman should give that complete refutation of the whole which several writers have given of particular parts of it†. At length, upon reading the work itself, and observing that it is a mere *farago* of unconnected passages, borrowed, in all probability, from Orange Newspapers, without plan, order, style, genius, or sentiment, I was no longer surprised that a man of talents and of a liberal mind was not found to undertake the dull and thankless task; since of the most successful refutation of such a work it may with truth be said:

“Nec habet victoria laudem\*.”

For my part, Sir, I am far from having either the patience or the leisure necessary for exposing the enormous mass of malicious and inflammatory falsehoods which Sir Richard Musgrave has palm-

\* See a Letter dated Dublin Castle, March 24, 1801, signed E. B. Littlehales, by order of Marquis Cornwallis, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and addressed to Sir R. Musgrave, in which the writer is ordered not to inscribe any future edition of his book to the said nobleman.

† Amongst these are F. Plowden, Esq. in his History of Ireland, vol. iii. Dr. Caulfield, Catholic Bishop of Wexford, in his Reply to the Misrepresentations of Sir R. Musgrave, Edward Hay, Esq. and Theobald M’Kenna, Esq.

‡ Ovid’s Metamor.



ed upon the public. All that I shall do is to present you with a small posey of flowers culled from his savory garden, leaving them to make their natural impression on your sensorium.

“ The common Irish,” says Sir Richard Musgrave, “ are doctrinally taught that they are bound by their religion to resist the laws and ordinances of a protestant state, and that an oath of allegiance is null and void\*.”——“ It is no less singular than true, that the lower class of Irish Papists never think their priests can contract any stain or contamination from the commission of crimes, how heinous so ever†.”——“ They (the rebels) killed one Coyle, a shoemaker, because he could not cross himself; but, on finding him to be a heretic, they compelled him to cross himself as well as he could with his left hand, (his right hand being disabled by a wound) superstitiously believing that the doing so would inevitably doom him to everlasting damnation‡.”—— Here we are told that a poor heretical shoemaker was murdered for not crossing himself, and yet that he did cross himself! and that he was supposed to be damned, not for his heresy, but for

\* See Hist. &c. p. 148. Each of these assertions is directly contrary to what the Irish are doctrinally taught in their *General Catechism*, printed by Fitzpatrick, Dublin, pp. 28, 29, 30, 4th edit.

† Ibid. p. 545. This slander stands in opposition to the whole tenor of the Catholic Catechism, which makes no exception with respect to the obligation of doing good and avoiding evil.

‡ Ibid. p. 254.



“ crossing himself as well as he could ! ” — “ The  
 “ practice of putting red tape round the necks  
 “ of popish children prevailed in the counties of  
 “ Wicklow and Wexford, to enable the rebels  
 “ to discriminate protestant from popish chil-  
 “ dren in the massacre intended of the former\*.”

—If this be true, how much louder must have been the lamentation of mothers throughout Wicklow and Wexford when the rebels became masters of those countries, than that which was formerly heard in Bethlehem of Juda ! and how must these wretches have *out-herodéd Herod himself* in the murder of innocents ! But all this is left to our conjecture ; for, unfortunately, Sir Richard has forgotten to put a word of it down in his book. In the mean time, as far as my information extends, not only the children, but also their mothers, were left uninjured by the rebels. Not a single protestant female was affronted by any of them, whilst the yeomen and king’s troops were infamous for their conduct to catholic women.—To return, however, to the tape : it is plain that our well-informed historian has mistaken the strings with which the poor people are accustomed to tie the gospel of St. John round the necks of their children, for badges of protection from slaughter. And surely the historian, who, as a custom-house officer, is accustomed to carry about the gospel of St. John in his pocket, and to force poor merchants and tradesmen, with

\* Ibid. p. 317.



uncovered heads, to bow down and kiss the leather and paper of which it consists, will not accuse catholic women of idolatry merely for honouring St. John's gospel !—" The Celts immolated human " victims to the Deity, and the Irish, who are of " that race, follow the same practice, and both " on the score of religion \* "—From this passage we learn that Sir Richard Musgrave, though an Irishman, is not a Celtic, or aboriginal Irishman, and that he does not approve of murdering men in honour of God. Of what breed he really is, heralds, I apprehend, will determine with less research than divines will what religion he is of. In the mean time, the religion of nature will tell him that it is base and wicked to murder a whole people in their reputation, from the price of whose sweat and blood he has risen to some distinction, and still draws so comfortable a salary ! ——" In the year 1790 the *translation* of a " book, entitled, *The General History of the " Church, from her Birth to her Triumphant " State in Heaven*, was printed in Dublin by J. " Mehain, a popish bookseller. It was *written " originally at Rome, by a sanguinary bigot of " the name of Pastorini. This writer defends " and expresses his approbation of all the mas- " sacres of Protestants which ever took place in " France and Ireland. This piece of folly and " blasphemy* was published to encourage the mass " of Irish Papists to join in the conspiracy

\* Hist. of Diff. Rebellions, p. 374.



“ which was formed so early, and in the massacre which was to succeed it in 1798 \*.”——I have quoted this passage, to shew the ease and confidence with which Sir Richard Musgrave, who professes to make “truth his polar star,” and to be so anxious to investigate it in every matter, is capable of palming upon his reader a whole string of falsehoods. For, 1st, This History of the Church is not a translation, but the original text. 2dly, It was not originally written at Rome, but in England. 3dly, The author was not a sanguinary bigot, but a most mild and enlightened Christian, as the whole tenor of his life and writings prove. 4thly, His name was not Pastorini, this being a mere allusion to his ministry, but the R. Rev. Charles Walmesley, D. D. F. R. S. having been one of the scientific men who were employed in correcting the old style. 5thly, The work does not express the most remote approbation of any massacre, whether French or Irish. 6thly, It consists neither of folly nor of blasphemy, but of a most ingenious and learned exposition of the book of revelations†. Lastly, It was not published to excite an Irish conspiracy or massacre, neither of which could be foreseen at the time of the publication; but to excite all Christians to lead a holy life, and to prepare for the coming of that awful Judge, before whom Sir Richard Musgrave will be ar-

\* Hist. of Diff. Reb. p. 634.

† See the 2d English edition, with additional Remarks and Elucidations by the Author, printed by Coghlan in 1798.



raigned for his unprecedented malice and calumnies.

I shall conclude these quotations with an extract from a copious Confession of Faith, consisting of 35 articles, which Sir Richard Musgrave publishes as the genuine Creed of Catholics, assuring his readers that one copy of it was found in a priest's box at Gorey, and is now in the possession of a clergyman whom he names at Arklow, that a second was found some where at Carlow, a third in the pocket of a drunken priest in the county of Meath, and a fourth in the pocket of a robber who was killed in the liberty of Dublin\*. I am sure, Sir, after perusing these quotations, you will not wish for any more of them, nor require any more documents to pronounce upon the character of Sir Richard's huge volume, or upon the conscience and honour of its author.

1. "When we assemble we all cross ourselves, saying: "We acknowledge these our articles in the presence of Christ's Vicar, THE LORD GOD THE POPE, and in the presence of the holy primates, bishops, monks, friars, and priests.

2. "We acknowledge they can make vice virtue, and virtue vice, according to their pleasure. They all falling down flat on their faces, beginning the articles, and speaking to the host, &c. we must all fall down before the great effigy of our Lord God Almighty.

\* See Hist. of Diff. Rebel. pp. 442, 443.



6. “ We are bound to believe that the holy  
 “ massacre was lawful, lawfully put in execu-  
 “ tion against Protestants, and likewise to con-  
 “ tinue the same, provided with the safety of our  
 “ lives.

8. “ We are bound to believe a heretic can-  
 “ not be saved unless he partake of extreme  
 “ unction.

10. “ We are not to keep our oaths with he-  
 “ retics, if they can be broken: for, says our  
 “ Holy Father, they have followed damnation,  
 “ and Luther, and Calvin.

12. “ We are bound to drive heretics out of  
 “ the land with fire, sword, faggot, and confu-  
 “ sion: as our Holy Father says, if their here-  
 “ sies prevail, we *will* become their slaves! O,  
 “ dear Father, keep us from that: (here the holy  
 “ water is shaken, and they say Hail Mary three  
 “ times.)

13. “ We are bound to absolve for money or  
 “ price those that imbrue their hands in the blood  
 “ of a heretic.

19. “ We are bound to celebrate the holy  
 “ mass in Latin, having ourselves cloathed in a  
 “ holy vestment and a shirt.

29. “ We maintain seven sacraments essen-  
 “ tial to salvation, baptism, eucharist, penance,  
 “ extreme unction, holy orders, and matri-  
 “ mony\*.”

\* Appendix to Hist. of Diff. Reb. p. 152.



Such, Sir, is this most curious Confession of Faith, the authenticity of which Sir Richard Musgrave so stifly maintains ; and thus far I believe in his narration, namely, that different copies of it were dispersed throughout the kingdom, and actually found in the situations he mentions ; one of them in the confession box of an absent priest, another in the pocket of a drunken priest, and the third in that of a dead robber : but the questions which remain to be solved, are, first, who drew up this master-piece of erudition and orthodoxy ? secondly, who placed copies of it in those situations, or caused them to be placed there ? If you, Sir, and I, and a hundred other persons of common sense and information, were required to fix upon some one Orangeman in preference to all others, for these bold though unsuccessful attempts upon Papists, I am confident there would be no difference of opinion amongst us.

If I had the unwished for honour of Sir Richard Musgrave's acquaintance, I would seriously advise him the next time he publishes a forged creed for the Catholics, to consult with Dr. Duigenan, who is a shrewd man, and well acquainted with their doctrine and discipline. Methinks this learned gentleman, on such an occasion would address him as follows : " I do  
 " not find fault, Sir Richard, with the nonsense  
 " of this creed ; for as our great predecessor, Lord  
 " Shaftsbury, used to say of his popish plot (the



“ credit of which has been given to Dr. Oates),  
 “ *The more nonsense the better ; if we cannot*  
 “ *make the people swallow greater nonsense than*  
 “ *this, we shall never do any good with them \** ;  
 “ still there is a prudence necessary in adapting  
 “ our nonsense *ad captum vulgi* ; and there is some  
 “ deceptions, which, falling under their senses,  
 “ it is impossible to make them swallow ; in  
 “ which case by attempting too much we shall  
 “ spoil all. Thus, to instance the most indis-  
 “ pensable, because the most irritating of all  
 “ charges against the Papists ; I, like you, have  
 “ maintained that they are bound to murder all  
 “ persons of a religion different from their own :  
 “ but I did not pretend, as you unadvisedly do,  
 “ that they are conscious of such an obligation,  
 “ and have a written creed to this effect ; for  
 “ the Protestants, who have those popish cate-  
 “ chisms in their hands, which I learnt in my  
 “ youth, and who have conversed and lived with  
 “ Papists in these islands, and at Rome itself,  
 “ would never have believed me, if I had said so.  
 “ My method was very different : I mounted  
 “ up to the Council of Lateran, held six hun-  
 “ dred years ago, and maintained that a certain  
 “ temporary ordinance of it, regarding the feu-  
 “ dal titles of the Albigenes, required their  
 “ murder, and binds Catholics with respect to  
 “ all persons of a different communion from them  
 “ till the end of time ; notwithstanding they

\* North's Examen, p. 95. Sir John Dalrymple's Memoirs, p. 43.



“ know nothing at all of the matter. Now here  
 “ I was out of the reach of the vulgar, both  
 “ well dressed and ill dressed; and thus I suc-  
 “ ceeded in my object in raising a clamour  
 “ against these Papists.—But above all things,  
 “ Sir Richard, it is necessary, in fabricating a  
 “ new set of articles for the Papists, that you  
 “ should be acquainted with those which they  
 “ are universally known to hold, as also with  
 “ the terms they make use of in their faith and  
 “ liturgy. How ridiculous, for example, is it  
 “ to make them talk as you do, of saying Mass  
 “ *in a holy vestment and a shirt*, when their very  
 “ infants will tell their Protestant playmates,  
 “ that it is not *a shirt*, but an *alb*, which the  
 “ priest puts on for that purpose!—How glar-  
 “ ingly absurd is it to ascribe to them an opinion  
 “ that heretics are to be saved by means of  
 “ *extreme unction* ! How inconsistent with the ar-  
 “ guments and ridicule which you yourself con-  
 “ stantly make use of against the popish laity  
 “ for respecting their priests, and against the  
 “ priests themselves for not marrying like the  
 “ laity, is that article in which you make them  
 “ profess that both *holy orders and matrimony are*  
 “ *essential to salvation*, and of course absolutely  
 “ necessary for all Christians indiscriminately !”

But my heart is sick, and I am ill disposed to  
 laugh, while the following awful reflections  
 present themselves upon the perusal of this creed.  
 If there are men in Ireland who are capable  
 of deliberately forging such diabolical articles of



belief and practice in the name of their catholic fellow subjects, and of introducing them into the boxes of absent people, and into the pockets of drunken or dead people, in order to gain them credit, what are not those men up to ! What will not they do, in other respects, against the poor devoted Papists, especially if they happen to be magistrates, or connected with government ! Is not such a set of men capable of accusing Papists unjustly, of crimes against the state and the peace of society, and of treating them as if they were actually guilty ? Is it not capable of ordering them to quit certain counties, and of burning down their cottages, in case they continue to remain in them ? Is it not likely, by suppressing information, packing juries, and intimidating witnesses, to pervert the course of justice, where the point at issue lies between an Orangeman and a Catholic ? Again, Sir, if there is a people against whom such infernal artifices of calumny and forgery are employed by a prevailing party, how wretched must be their situation ! Can we be surprised that desperation should some times have driven them to the commission of those very crimes, which they are falsely accused of being habitually addicted to ? Lastly, Sir, (but here again I can indulge a smile), if Sir Richard Musgrave is capable of publishing to the world a document so glaringly absurd, so revolting to common sense as this Confession of Faith is, and of even appealing to witnesses for its authenticity, there needs nothing



more to stamp the character of the historian, and to consign the ponderous history itself to the class of fabrications.

I remain, &c.

## LETTER XI.

*Thurles, July 15, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

FROM the variegated beauties of Kilkenny I arrived, after a tedious journey westward, at the dull uniform plains and dreary bogs, in the midst of which this populous town is situated. But the endearing kindness and rare virtues of so amiable and valuable a friend, as my present host, are capable of rendering the most gloomy situation pleasant and agreeable. With respect, however, to the bogs, dark as they are to the eye, they are yet a source of comfort and of wealth to an industrious people, who have little or no other fuel. Amongst other objects of their industry at present, one of them is the rebuilding of their noble and spacious chapel in the name



of their peculiar patron, as well as national Apostle, THE GREAT SAINT PATRICK.

Nothing could equal my surprise, at coming into this island and dipping into the works of history and antiquity, which have lately appeared here, than to find that it is becoming the fashion to deny the very existence of this renowned saint; and to class him with the tutelary deities of pagan nations. This opinion, which was first broached upon a principle of hostility to the religion preached by St. Patrick, has been taken up by the ignorant, the bigotted, and the irreligious. To the last mentioned class in particular, nothing is so precious as a pretext for laughing at the presumed darkness and superstition of their pious ancestors, whilst, in fact, they themselves are the deserved object of pity to men of sound judgment and real learning. After all, Sir, we must allow, it is not so very extraordinary that the existence of the Apostle of Ireland should be called in question, since upon the self same principle, pretenders to philosophy have, in our days, denied there ever were such beings as Abraham, the father of God's people, Moses, the prophet and legislator of the Jews, and even Jesus Christ, the founder of the Christian religion.

The author of the system in question is the Rev. Edward Ledwich, LL. D. \*, a writer who,

\* This writer informs us, from Harris, that Ryves, as Master in Chancery, in the reign of James I. started some doubts concerning



warped by religious prejudices, takes as much pains to depreciate the character of his ancestors, and to obscure their history, upon almost every subject he treats of, as a genuine antiquary would take to illustrate them. I can forgive the Irish for not giving a complete answer to Sir Richard Musgrave's *History of the different Rebellions*, on the grounds which I have elsewhere stated; but really I cannot excuse their neglecting to refute Dr. Ledwich's *History and Antiquities of Ireland*. Whenever this task shall be undertaken by a writer of ordinary talents, learning, and industry, I pledge myself that the said work will be seen to contain more errors, both as to facts and as to reasoning, than any other work of equal bulk, bearing the name of a man of letters. The authority of Dr. Ledwich has seduced the Rev. Mr. Gordon \*, and Sir John Carr †, who give blindly into all his errors concerning St. Patrick, the original faith of Ireland, and a variety of other religious subjects. It is hardly worth while mentioning that Sir Richard Mus-

the existence of St. Patrick, by way of answering a certain libel, and that he tried in vain to get them confirmed by the learned Camden and Usher, lamenting, as he does, heavily, that they could not be induced to do this, and that in consequence of the "decisions of these men — hagiography," (as he calls ancient history), "triumphed over criticism and erudition," p. 59.—The fact is, Camden and Usher had a reputation for learning to lose, which Ryves had not.

\* See his late *History of Ireland*.

† The Stranger in Ireland. It is proper to mention that this ingenious and otherwise liberal writer, professes not to be versed in subjects of antiquity, but to be guided by Dr. Ledwich.



grave has thought proper to insert these at the beginning of his ponderous History, where also he condescends to lecture the Irish Catholics on the religion of their ancestors, and to give them his spiritual advice in a variety of particulars.

Let us now see what force we have to draw up in defence of the patron Saint of Ireland against this new formed battalion which opposes him. In the first place we have amongst our cotemporaries, General Vallancey, Rev. Mr. Whitaker, Charles O'Connor, Esq. Rev. Alban Butler, &c. each of whom is a host of literature compared with Dr. Ledwich and his followers. To go higher up, we have Fleury, Mosheim, Tillemont, Cave, Nicholson, Harris, Ware, Usher, Camden, Spelman, Bollandus, Baronius, Bellarmin, Godwin, Parker, Bale, and, in short, every other writer of distinguished learning in modern times, Protestant as well as Catholic, who has had occasion to speak of the conversion of Ireland. Are authors of their character to be reproached with being inferior to Dr. Ledwich and Dr. Ryves in criticism and erudition?"\* To proceed now to ancient authors in behalf of St. Patrick. There is the great light of the twelfth century, St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux in Burgundy, who mentions the saint by name, as "the apostle who converted the whole Irish nation to the faith of Christ†." Another writer

\* See Ledwich's *Antiq.* p. 59.

† In *Vita S. Malach.* c. x.



of the same age, our countryman Joceline, a Cistercian monk, of the Abbey of Furness, in Lancashire, has left us this saint's life in great detail. He tells us that about three score other writers had preceded him in this subject, but that he had particularly made use of the four histories of St. Patrick's life, which had been drawn up by four cotemporary authors, his disciples, SS. Luman, Mel, Benignus, and Patrick Junior.

There is another life of this saint still extant, composed by Probus, who lived in the seventh century \*, and a pretty long account of him by our British annalist Nennius, who flourished also in the seventh century†. Our saint's name occurs, and on the same day, March 17, in all the ancient martyrologies extant, namely, in the Roman, in that of venerable Bede, in those of Usuard, Rhabanus, and Notker, to say nothing of the Chronicle of Sigebert, the Saxon Chronicle, that of Addo, Erric of Auxerres, Giraldus Cambrensis, William of Malmesbury, Marianus, Scotus, and a great number of other ancient writers, from the eighth to the twelfth century; all which authorities shew that St. Patrick was acknowledged by the whole Church in ancient times, as well as by the Christians of Ireland, for the apos-

\* Such is the date assigned to this writer by the profoundly learned Bollandus. His work formerly passed for that of Bede.

† *Historia Britonum*. The learned editor of this author, Gale, says of him, "Claruit Nennius Anno post Christum 620." Some authors, however, bring him down to the tenth century.



tle of the latter. Not only do all ecclesiastical histories, but also the civil or Brehon laws of Ireland, record the merits of this saint\*. In short, we have an hymn still in being, composed in his honour, by one of his converts and disciples, St. Fiech, which is generally allowed by the learned to be genuine†. We have, moreover, the acts of two councils held by St. Patrick‡, and even a circumstantial account of his life, called a Confession, drawn up by himself, together with a letter addressed to King Corotic, which all the best critics admit to be his real composition§.

But there are not only written documents which prove the existence of St. Patrick, but likewise all other kinds of monuments by which the memory of personages who heretofore lived can be recorded. The churches which he built, the dioceses which he formed, the monasteries which he founded, the havens where he landed, the places in which he dwelt (most of which edifices and places have preserved his name from time immemorial), the very conversion of the Irish nation, and the universal tradition, not

\* Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis, by General Vallancey, vol. iii. pp. 95, 108.

† Colgan. In Vita S. Pat. Ware, Harris, Usher, Nicholson's Irish lib. Ledwich, by way of discrediting the antiquity of this hymn, makes the poet appeal to *Old Historians* for certain particulars of the saint's life. This is a wilful literary fraud. The original words are barely, *Ut refertur in Historiis*.

‡ See Spelman's Councils, also those of Labbe.

§ Tillemont, Fleury, Butler, Usher, Ware, &c.



only of our islands, but also of the whole Christian continent, are all so many monuments of this illustrious saint, and have preserved his memory fresh and untainted till the very hour in which Dr. Ledwich wrote his book, as he himself acknowledges\*. In a word, I have no difficulty in saying, that the proofs of there having been such a man as Romulus, or Alexander the Great, are not so numerous and convincing, as are those for the existence of St. Patrick, and that the latter cannot be rejected without establishing a universal historical scepticism. Supposing for a moment that St. Patrick did not convert the Irish, the question then is: Who did convert them? It would be strange if they alone were ignorant of what all other nations are acquainted with, namely, who was their apostle! if they alone had no tradition to inform them by whom they had been taught to abandon idolatry, to abhor human sacrifices, to renounce the gratification of their passions, and to worship one Eternal Being, by the observance of his pure and sublime precepts †!

\* Antiq. p. 59.

† A late tourist, whose wit becomes him better upon every other subject than upon those of religion, says, that "St Patrick was canonized for teaching the Irish to believe in the Trinity by means of a shamrock."—The Stranger in Ireland.—It is plain this writer has a very inadequate idea of the benefits of Christianity in elevating the mind, and purifying the heart, independent of its future promises. But leaving all this out of the question, Dr. Ledwich should have informed him that St. Patrick was never canonized and that there is no foundation for the story of the shamrock.



The apostle of Ireland being thus insolently attacked, it was not to be expected that its peculiar patroness, that saint's cotemporary and spiritual daughter, St. Bridget, would escape from insult. But in this instance it seemed adviseable to adopt a different kind of warfare for annoying the ancient religion, from that which was used in the former instance. The existence of this female saint, though resting upon the same sort of evidence as that of St. Patrick and his fellow missionaries from Rome, is by no means denied: it is even admitted on this occasion, and to answer the present purpose, that they also had an existence\*: but it is pretended that they had "an accommodating spirit," in making an incongruous mixture of Christianity and Paganism. In short, it is maintained that St. Bridget and her sister nuns of Kildare, were a continuation of "heathen Druidesses, who preserved from the remotest ages an inextinguishable fire†;" or "priestesses of Vesta‡." This is asserted on no better grounds, than because the nuns of Kildare used to keep a fire always lighted in their convent, whilst other Catholics extinguished theirs previously to the paschal solemnity§.

\* Antiquities of Ireland, p. 76.

† Ibid.

‡ See Gordon and Carr.

§ "Apud Kildariam occurrit Ignis Sanctæ Brigidæ quem *Inextinguibilem* vocant, non quod extingui non possit, sed quod tam solícite moniales et sanctæ mulieres ignem, suppetente materia,



But first, if the sixty-six hagiographers who wrote the life of St. Patrick are not to be believed for the existence of this apostle of Ireland, upon what rational ground is Cogitosus, with a comparatively small number of the same hagiographers, to be credited for the existence of St. Bridget? 2dly, Upon what authority is it asserted that “Druidesses kept up an inextinguishable fire from the remotest ages;” or that there were Druidesses or priestesses of Vesta in Ireland at all during the sixth century? Dr. Ledwich, after all his enquiries, has not been able to produce any such authority, (which, indeed, if it existed, would overturn his system concerning the conversion of Ireland previously to that century.) But lastly, it is plain that Dr. Ledwich and his followers, in representing the preservation of a constant fire as a practice essentially connected with paganism, have overlooked a divine ordinance to this purpose, of earlier date than either Celtic Druidism or the worship of Vesta: I speak of the law in Leviticus, c. vi. v. 12. *The fire upon the altar (of the tabernacle) shall be burning in it, and shall not be put out.* It was for contemning this *inextinguishable fire*, and using a profane fire instead of it in their censers, that the Levites, Nadab and Abihu, were miraculously burnt to death, *Levit. vi. 12.* To

“fovent et nutriunt ut à tempore virginis per tot annorum curricula  
 “semper mansit inextinctus.”

Girald. Camb. de Mirabilibus Hibern. Dist. ii. c. 34.



give you a proper idea, Sir, of this matter, I must observe, that according to the ancient as well as the modern ecclesiastical liturgy\*, fire was to be struck and lighted up, with solemn prayers and ceremonies, on Easter eve, which fire was to be kept burning in the church lamps till the eve of Good Friday in the ensuing year. Now it might easily happen, that for some such charitable or pious motive as the nuns of Kildare afterwards pleaded†, St. Bridget might have urged an excuse, or obtained a dispensation for keeping up the fire in her convent on the afore-said eve. This custom being once established, from mere respect to the holy foundress, would unquestionably be retained by her successors. At length, however, to prevent any superstitious attachment to a singular practice, and to destroy the resemblance between this fire at Kildare, and that which had formerly been kept up in pagan Rome in honour of Vesta, the Archbishop of Dublin, Henry de Londres, in the year 1220, caused it to be put out‡; after which the nuns were left at liberty to light it up again, and to keep it unextinguished, as they did till three centuries later, when it was finally quenched by the rapacious tyrant who turned them out of their habitation.

\* That this discipline prevailed in Ireland at the period in question, we learn from the life of St. Kieran, Bishop of Saigar, who was cotemporary with St. Bridget.

† The nuns urged that they kept up this fire for the relief and comfort of the poor. See Harris's Ware.

‡ Auctor Anonym. apud Jac. Ware. Disquis. p. 97.



These modern hunters after paganism in Ireland, think they have discovered another instance of it (though they derive this neither from the Celtic Druidesses nor the Roman Vestals, but from the Carthaginians or Phœnicians) in the fires lighted up in different parts of the country on the eve of St. John the Baptist, or Midsummer day. This they represent as the idolatrous worship of Baal, the Philistine god of fire, and as intended by his pretended catholic votaries to obtain of him fertility for the earth. The fact is, these fires on the eve of the 24th of June were heretofore as common in England and all over the continent, as they are now in Ireland, and have as little relation with the worship of Baal, as the bonfires have which blaze on the preceding 4th of June, being the King's birthday: they are both intended to be demonstrations of joy. That, however, in honour of Christ's precursor is particularly appropriate, as alluding to his character of *bearing witness to the light*, John i. 7. and of his being himself a bright and *shining light*, John v. 35\*.

I remain, &c.

\* Durandus Rationale Divin. Offic.



## LETTER XII.

*Thurles, July 17, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

IT would be an injustice to Dr. Ledwich, still more than to St. Patrick and to Ireland, were I to omit noticing the effulgence of “erudition and criticism” which burst upon the learned world “in the hour” when he wrote the sixth chapter of his *Antiquities*\*: an effulgence, however, which is acknowledged to have escaped the optics of a Camden and an Usher, when particularly directed to it†, and of every other historian and critic down to our present antiquary.

Dr. Ledwich, upon whose foundation Gordon, Carr, and Musgrave build, tells us that there were Christians, and even bishops in Ireland, previous to the æra fixed on for the arrival of St. Patrick‡; unfortunately, however, for the

\* *Antiq.* p. 59.† *Ibid.* p. 58.

‡ Dr. L. frequently repeats that the Irish had a regular hierarchy before the age of St. Patrick. His argument is truly singular: Archbishop Laurence says that the religion of the Irish was the same with that of the Britons (namely, at the beginning of the 5th century.) Now the Britons had then a hierarchy, therefore the Irish had a hierarchy at the beginning of the 5th century!



cause of incredulity, these bishops, if there were more than one, received their orders and their mission from Rome, no less than St. Patrick and his companions did : now it is to get rid of this Roman origin that Dr. Ledwich plunges into the gulph of scepticism and inconsistency. It is admitted, then, that there were many Christians in Ireland before the arrival of St. Patrick in the fifth century. It is admitted that St. Palladius, a bishop, was in Ireland a little before St. Patrick, having been sent thither by the same Pope Celestine, who sent St. Patrick \*, as likewise St. Kiaran, St. Ibar, St. Declan, and St. Albeus ; but they likewise derived their episcopacy and mission either immediately from Rome, or through the medium of St. Patrick's consecration †. The question, however, is not who was the first bishop in Ireland, but by whom the Irish nation was generally converted to Christianity.

Our critic next attempts to invalidate the credit of all the ancient calendars and martyrologies, that is to say, of the public registers of all the ancient churches in Christendom, being the most authentic and certain monuments of the facts they contain which are to be found. He objects that certain errors have been detected in some of the calendars. But by whom have they been detected ? By the catholic hagio-

\* Prosper, a cotemporary writer ; also Bede, Eccl. Hist. l. i. c. 13.

† See Butler's *Lives of the Saints*, March 5, Sept. 12. Usher, Ware, &c.



graphers themselves, by Bollandus, and Baillet, Butler, Latoni, and Fleury, in consequence of which detections they have been generally corrected in the calendars and liturgical books, as that in particular was which confounded St. Dennis of Paris with St. Dennis the Areópagite in those of the Gallican Church. In the next place, if it were reasonable to reject all ancient histories and records in which an error had been detected, we might throw the whole collection of them into the fire. For which of them is entirely faultless? After all, the errors which are now in question are not, generally speaking, those of the hagiographers, but of the present critic. He pretends, indeed, that “those eminent catholic writers, Bollandus, Papebroch, Launoi, and Tillemont, rejected and spoke contemptibly of the deified phantoms,” as he calls the saints in general. But what person of learning is not indignant at this deception; it being notorious that these truly profound scholars spent their lives in recording the histories and illustrating the virtues of these very saints? In writing their works, the martyrologies were avowedly their authority; next to which, were the most genuine acts of the saints they could procure. But what more particularly regards the present purpose is, we know that these profoundly learned scholars and enlightened critics have one and all acknowledged the existence of Ireland’s apostle St. Patrick in general, and the authenticity in particular of



the account which he gives of himself in his celebrated Confession.

Dr. Ledwich proceeds to find fault with certain puerile stories recorded of St. Patrick by Joceline and other writers. But do not the classical Curtius and the judicious Livy relate many idle tales of the founders of the Macedonian and Roman empires? Are we, therefore, to say there never were such personages as Alexander the Great and Romulus?—Certainly not. What then are we to do?—Reason tells us to imitate the example of those illustrious scholars and hagiographers mentioned above, in lighting up the torch of criticism, when we examine the legends of antiquity, in order to discover which of them are to be rejected and which retained.

Hitherto it appears that Dr. Ledwich has but been skirmishing: now, however, he is going to display his full force, as needs must be, against the united learning and criticism of past ages. “I shall now proceed,” he says, “with stronger evidence to prove our apostle an ideal personage\*.” He first argues, that if St. Patrick had received his mission and orders from archiepiscopal dignity, Pope Celestine, Cogitosus, Adamnan, Cummin, and Bede, would not have passed over these circumstances in silence.—To this I answer, that it is contrary to every rule of criticism and common sense, to oppose negative presumptions to positive testimony. The whole

\* Antiq. p. 62.



collection of ancient writers, whose subject required them to treat of the conversion of Ireland, agree in the above-mentioned particulars; but Bede, for example, having undertaken to write the history of England's conversion, not that of Ireland, (which latter event preceded the former by a century and a half) he had no greater reason to speak of St. Patrick, than he had to speak of St. Remigius, the apostle of the French. The same observation applies in a great measure to the Irish writers, Cogitosus, Adamnan, and Cum-mian. We have seen above, that where Bede's subject did lead him to commemorate St. Patrick, namely, in his Martyrology, he has actually done it\*.

The remainder of our sceptic's "stronger evidence" is equally defective and trifling. He objects that Laurence, St. Austin's successor in the see of Canterbury, writing to the prelates of Ireland, complained that Dagan, one of their number, coming to pay him a visit, refused to eat with him, or to remain in the same house with him†. Hence the sceptic concludes that St. Patrick could not have been the apostle of the Irish, because, in this case, Laurence, who was the Pope's legate, would not have failed to reproach them with ingratitude to the Roman See. He goes on to argue that Dagan must have consider-

\* Vide 16 Kalendas Aprilis in Martyrol. Ven. Bedæ, item Rabani, Usuardi et Notkeri.

† Vide Hist. Eccles. Bedæ, l. xi. c. 4. p. 63,



ed Laurence as excommunicated, by refusing to eat with him, in as much as by the canons it was held unlawful to eat with an excommunicated person.—The first part of this paralogism, I confess, I am unable to refute, because I cannot see in it the very semblance of an argument. To the second part I answer, that though it was held unlawful to eat with an excommunicated person, yet a man might refuse, in ancient as well as modern times, to eat with those who are not excommunicated, through pride, resentment, and a variety of other motives.

Dr. Ledwich goes on to quote the letter of St. Aldhelm to Geruntius, King of Cornwall, and the British clergy of his dominions, in which the saint testifies that the people of South Wales (Demetæ) carried their resentment against the English, though Christians, so far that they would not salute them, nor pray with them, nor drink out of any cup which they had used, unless it was previously washed, &c.\* After this, the sceptic exclaims: “Words cannot convey a “stronger detestation of Popery, than this testimony of Aldhelm †.” The conclusion he would have us draw is, that the Irish being of the same religion with the Britons, could not be of the same religion with the English, in as much as the latter were avowedly converts of Roman missionaries; and that therefore the Irish had

\* Ep. 44. Inter. Epist. S. Bonifac.

† P. 6c.



not been converted by St. Patrick, who was one of that description. This is a hobbling sorites, being lame in all its joints. It is sufficient, however, for the present purpose, to observe that the ancient Britons or Welsh had other motives of animosity against the English Saxons than those of a religious nature: motives which every one who has travelled in Wales, knows they cherish down to the present times. Nevertheless, I do not deny that there were a few even religious differences, for a certain time, between the ancient Christians of these islands on the one hand, and the See Apostolic, with the English and the Christians of the whole world, on the other. We are distinctly informed what the subjects of these differences were, being merely points of discipline, and no way regarding faith. It is notorious that the chief of these related to the time of celebrating the festival of Easter, (a festival which regulated all the moveable feasts and fasts of the year) and to the above-mentioned pride and uncharitableness of the Welsh with respect to the English. We have the most clear and positive evidence possible for deciding upon this whole matter, in the conference which was held between St. Augustine of Canterbury and the British bishops on the confines of England and Wales. In this conference St. Austin told them that many of their *practices* (observe, Sir, there is no complaint on the subject of their *faith*) were contrary to those of the Universal Church: never-



theless, that if they would yield to him in the following three points, to keep Easter at the proper time, to observe the ceremonies of the Apostolic Church of Rome in baptism, and to join their labours with his in converting the English nation, he was willing to tolerate their particular practices in other respects\*. This last condition required by St. Augustine demonstrates that it was a want of charity on the part of the Britons towards their former enemies the English, and not any diversity of religion, which caused the principal part of the differences between them: for if these British bishops had differed from the Roman missionaries, either about the Eucharist or the Supremacy of the Roman See, or any other article of faith, would St. Augustine not only have allowed but even have required them to join with him in the evangelical work of converting the English, which work he had begun and was then carrying on with the greatest success? Here it is impossible to excuse Dr. Ledwich, who, it appears, has read Bede, from a deliberate imposition on his unlearned readers, especially when, referring to

\* Dicebat autem eis (Augustinus Episcopus Britonum) quod in  
 " multis quidem nostræ consuetudini, imo universalis ecclesiæ con-  
 " traria geritis: et tamen, si in tribus his mihi obtemperare vultis, ut  
 " Pascha suo tempore celebretis, ut ministerium baptisandi juxta  
 " morem Romanæ Sanctæ et Apostolicæ Ecclesiæ compleatis, ut  
 " genti Anglorum una nobiscum prædicetis verbum Domini, cætera  
 " quæ agitis, quamvis moribus nostris contraria æquanimiter cuncta  
 " tolerabimus." Bed. Eccl. Hist. l. ii. c. 2.



the passage above cited, he exclaims : “ Words cannot convey a stronger detestation of Popery than this testimony of Aldhelm.” This writer is not only aware that the disputes between the Welsh prelates and the Roman missionaries in the sixth century, had no sort of relation with the doctrines and practices which constitute what is now contemptuously termed Popery : but he is conscious, that in these very disputes, particularly in what regards the time of keeping Easter, and the obligation of forgiving injuries, he himself is forced to side with the Roman missionaries against the British bishops.

Our critic’s next strong objection, like his first, is a mere negation. He refers to a letter written in the name of Pope John, and certain other officers of the Roman Church, to the bishops and priests of Ireland, in which he says there is no mention made of St. Patrick. He ought, however, to have added, that the subject of the letter did not lead to any mention of him, as it barely related to the old question concerning the right time of celebrating Easter, and to the Pelagian heresy, which heresy appeared to be then sprouting up in Ireland \*. This letter, or another written a little before it by Pope Honorius, seems to have produced its proper effect, as we are assured by Bede that, about this time, the right and canonical time of keeping

\* Bede l. ii. c. 19.



Easter was observed in the southern parts of Ireland, in consequence of "an admonition from " the Apostolical See\*." Thus much is clear from this letter, and from two former letters of St. Gregory the Great to the bishops of Ireland†, that these prelates were in the habit of consulting the Pope for the time being as their spiritual father, and the latter of directing and reprehending them as his spiritual children: so far were they from treating each other as heretics!

After all his boasting, the declared enemy of St. Patrick is forced to confess that all his "stronger evidences," as he calls them, are of a mere "negative nature;" but he expresses his hope that they may gain some "weight by " their accumulation‡," though they have none when separately taken. It is proper, however, he should learn that *nonentity added to nonentity will never make positive being*. Uneasy at the awkward situation in which he finds himself after all his vaunting of enlightened criticism and demonstrative proofs, he at once begs the question, by asserting, in various vague and un-

\* " Porro gentes Scotorum quæ in Australibus Hybernæ insulæ partibus morabantur, jamdudum, ad admonitionem Apostolicæ sedis Antistitis, Pascha canonico ritu observare didicerunt." Bed. l. iii. c. 3.

† Vide Epistolam Gregorii "Universis Episcopis per Hyberniam," lib. ii. Epistolarum Greg. Ep. 36. Ed. hom. Item. Epist. Greg. "Quirino Episcopo et cæteris Episcopis in Hybernia Catholicis," lib. ix. ep. 61.

‡ Antiq. pp. 62, 64.



supported forms of speech\*, that the religion of the ancient Irish was essentially different from that of the English and their Roman instructors, and that this is plain from Bede; lastly, that tho' he cannot discover "who was the preacher of "these new opinions," as he calls them, "so "opposite to the Romans†;" yet that certainly it was not St. Patrick, nor any other missionary from Rome. He adds, that the first preachers of Christianity in Ireland must have come from Asia‡. I shall take an opportunity, in a subsequent letter which I mean to send you, of recurring to this alledged difference between the ancient Christianity of Ireland and that of Rome, in which I shall particularly enquire what the enemies of St. Patrick would gain for their cause, were it in their power to derive the Christianity of Ireland from the Eastern Church. In the mean time,

I am, &c.

\* Antiq. p. 64.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.



## LETTER XIII.

*Thurles, July 19, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

STILL dissatisfied, as he has reason to be, with his success against St. Patrick, Dr. Ledwich returns to the charge, and begins to carp at a number of circumstantial particulars related by the different biographers of our saint, being such, as if proved to be untrue or absurd, would barely affect the accuracy, or judgment of the writers, and not the existence of the saint. However, as I have resolved to give this bold invader of historical truth a full hearing, I will not leave even these his minuter criticisms unanswered.

He objects then to what is related of our saint's being born in Scotland of Christian parents, before that country was evangelized,\* according to the chronology of Bede \*. But first our critic rejects the authority of Bede in toto, as to the different conversions of the inhabitants of these islands, in as much as Bede ascribes these conversions in general to Rome. In the second place, Dr. Ledwich knows that several hagio-

\* P. 64.



graphers and learned writers place the saint's birth at St. David's, in Pembrokeshire\*. Thirdly, he is aware that Kirkpatrick, though now in Scotland, was formerly within the territory of Britain †; and that at all events St. Patrick was of a British, not a Pictish or Scotch family ‡. Of what consequence then is it to enquire when the Picts and the Scots were converted, since it is demonstratively certain that the Britons were Christians long before St. Patrick's grandfather was born?

Our critic next objects to the circumstance of St. Patrick's having resided amongst the canons of the Lateran Church at Rome, because he tells us, from Onuphrius, that "Pope Gelasius" was the first who placed canons there, in the "year 492 §."—He had before objected that Platina, a superficial modern writer, does not speak of St. Patrick in his lives of the Popes, and now he quotes Platina's Commentator, Onuphrius, to prove that there were no clergy to officiate at the head church of the Christian world || in the middle of the fifth century. The

\* Probus in Vit. Pat. Gerald. Camb. Topogr. Hib. Stanyhurst, Camden, &c.

† Usher in Primord.

‡ The saint in his Confession calls himself a British Roman.

§ Antiq. p. 58.

|| There is an inscription on its walls to this effect. It was the imperial palace of Constantine, and given by him to Pope Silvester long before the Pontificate of Gelasius. St. Leo had established the regular observances of St. Augustine of Hippo amongst the clergy of this church.



fact is, though Dr. Ledwich does not appear to know it, that, during several ages after the death of St. Patrick, the secular clergy in general were called *Canonici*, because the canons were their rule of life, in contradistinction to the *Monachi* or *Regulars*, who professed to follow the rule of St. Benedict \*, or some other monastic rule.

The critic now carps at the title of *Archbishop*, conferred on St. Patrick by his biographers: "Here," he says, "all biographers, ancient and modern, discover their ignorance of ecclesiastical history.—Before Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, enjoyed this title in 673, it was unknown in Britain †."—Now let us see (without going further for this purpose than our national historian) whether "all biographers, ancient and modern, discover their ignorance," or whether Dr. Ledwich discovers his presumption in this particular! —I read then in Venerable Bede, that the man of God, Augustine, going to Arles, was consecrated *Archbishop* of the English nation, "according to the orders of the holy father Gregory, by Etherius, *Archbishop* of the said city ‡." I read concerning St. Laurence, the immediate successor of Augustine, that, having "obtained the rank of

\* Concil. Venum. A. D. 755. Can. ii. Concil. Aquisgran. cap. 115. See Van Espen, Tom. i. de Canonicis.

† P. 65.

‡ Bede Eccl. Hist. l. i. c. 27. See also c. 24.



*Archbishop*," \* he endeavoured to promote the work of God which was begun; and that he "not only took care of the new church of England, but also extended his pastoral solicitude to the ancient inhabitants of Britain, and to the Scots who inhabited Ireland †." I read of their successors, Justus and Honorius, that they also were honoured with the title of *Archbishop* ‡. I might extend my arguments, were there occasion for it, by demonstrating that York §, St. David's, Seville, Mentz, Sirmium, and several other sees in the western, as well as in the eastern church, no less than Canterbury and Arles, were honoured with the title and jurisdiction of *Archbishoprics* long before the time of St. Theodore. But the occasion does not require such a dissertation, and, I think, enough has been already said to prove that critic grossly ignorant, as well as intolerably vain, who has ventured to reproach "all the biographers of St. Patrick, "ancient and modern, with ignorance of ecclesiastical history."

The following objection is nearly allied to the foregoing. The writer cavils at the legatine authority and the use of the pall, said to have been conferred upon St. Patrick by Pope Hilary in 462.

\* "Laurentius Archiepiscopus gradu potitus," l. ii. c. 4.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid. l. ii. c. 15, 18.

§ St. Paulinus, who was consecrated for the see of York in 622, is expressly termed *Archbishop* by Bede, l. iii. c. 25, and received the metropolitanical pall from Pope Honorius, l. ii. c. 17.



Now supposing that Joceline, arguing from the practice in his own time, may have erred in imagining that the use of this ornament necessarily accompanied the metropolitical dignity, yet nothing is more certain than that Dr. Ledwich himself is most egregiously deceived in fancying that the Popes had no legates before the second Nicene Council in 787. To mention two or three instances out of as many hundreds of such delegations. The great St. Augustine says, that he was sent by Pope Zozimus to Cesaræa, in Mauritania, to perform certain ecclesiastical commissions in his name \*. St. Leo the Great, in the year 444, testifies, that he had appointed Anastasius, a bishop, to be his Vicar in the province of Illyrica †, and St. Gregory the Great acknowledges the Archbishop of Arles to have been the legate of the apostolic see for a long time past, with the use of the pall, in the letter by which he makes St. Augustine of Canterbury his legate throughout the British islands ‡, though he did not bestow the pall upon him till a later occasion. Dr. Ledwich concludes the above-

\* Aug. Epis. 157.

† “Vicem nostram coepiscopo nostro Anastasio, secuti eorum exemplum quorum nobis recordatio est veneranda, commisimus.” St. Leo, Metrop. Illyricum, ep. 25.

‡ “Interrogatio Augustini—Qualiter debemus cum Galliarum an Britanniarum episcopis agere?—Respondit Gregorius—In Galliarum Episcopos nullam tibi auctoritatem tribuimus; quia ab antiquis prædecessorum meorum temporibus pallium Arlatensis episcopus accepit, quem nos privare auctoritate accepta non debemus, Britanniarum autem omnes episcopos tuæ fraternitati committimus ut indocti doceantur, infirmi robborentur, perversi auctoritate corrigan-  
t. Bed. Hist. Eccl. l. i. c. 27.



mentioned criticisms, or rather cavils, in the following manner: "It must be tiresome to the reader, as it is to the writer, to pursue further this critical examination of the life of our saint. I do not hesitate in affirming that every chapter in Joceline, Colgan, and Probus, is liable to similar objections; internal and invincible proofs these, that our apostle and his history are equally fabulous \*." I also, Sir, must confess, that it is tiresome to argue with a writer so strong in assertion and so weak in proof; and I, in my turn, do not hesitate to affirm, that there is not a paragraph in all Dr. Ledwich's criticisms concerning St. Patrick and the ancient religion of Ireland, which does not consist of groundless assertions and chimerical suppositions, in opposition to positive evidence.

What I have just now said concerning chimerical suppositions more particularly applies to the account which our writer gives of the supposed origin of the history of St. Patrick. He says: that "The ninth century, being famous for reviving and incorporating pagan practices with the Christian ritual, and observing that Rome had her Mars, Athens her Minerva, Carthage her Juno, and every country and city a proper and peculiar deity, whose guardian care was its protection and security, conceived it a very becoming employment for Christian saints to assume the patronage of a Chris-

\* Antiq. p. 66.



“tian people, &c. \*.”—I should be glad to know what Dr. Ledwich means by the *ninth century*. Did these brilliant ideas seize all at once the whole collection of men, women, and children in the ninth century? Or was there a combination of artful impostors throughout Christendom, who undertook to make their respective countrymen believe that there had been a St. Patrick in Ireland, a St. David in Wales, a St. George in England, a St. Palladius in Scotland, &c. whilst they were perfectly convinced that all such saints were mere chimeras? If the latter supposition is adopted, as undoubtedly it must be, I ask, by what means could these impostors prevail on the learned men throughout Ireland, England, Scotland, France, Flanders, and Italy, to adopt their scheme, and concur together, as they have done, in publishing the same particulars concerning St. Patrick; for example, without the reclamation or objection of a single individual amongst them? By what artifice could they induce the princes and people of Christendom to build churches to the honour of this phantom termed St. Patrick, and to call their towns, havens, and other places after his name? I could be amused, Sir, with the revery of Dr. Ledwich, had it the merit of originality, but being acquainted with the learned dreams of the celebrated Hardouin, who gravely maintains that all the classical books, except Cicero’s

\* Antiq. p. 66.



works, Pliny's Natural History, Virgil's Georgics, and Horace's Satyrs, were forged by the monks of the thirteenth century\*. Dr. Ledwich's system loses its only merit in my eyes, and raises no other sentiment in my mind than unqualified contempt and indignation.

Our author, by way of illustrating his supposition, alludes to the error of Hilduin, in confounding St. Dionysius, Bishop of Paris, with Dionysius the Areopagite, and to the legendary tale of St. James's body being conveyed from Judea to Compostella, but in neither of these cases does there appear to have been a deliberate attempt to impose upon mankind. The writers of these accounts were weak and ignorant men, who paid too much credit to popular reports, and by committing them to writing, gave a temporary run to them. They did not palm upon the world a belief in the real existence of phantoms. The author had before quoted with applause the opinion of a well-informed writer, as he calls him, who says, that "the Spanish  
" Patrick might have appeared in a dream to the

\* If Dr. Ledwich could be compared with Hardouin, he might hereafter be honoured with the same epitaph :

Hic Jacet

Hominum paradoxotatos

Orbis literati portentum,

Venerandæ antiquitatis cultor et destructor,

Docte Febricitans,

Somnia et inaudita commenta vigilans edidit,

Credulitate puer, audaciâ juvenis, deliriis senex.



“ Irishas St. George did to the English \*, and  
 “ become their protector, and at last their apos-  
 “ tle†.” The truth is, St. George was chosen  
 to be the patron saint of England‡, not in  
 consequence of any dream, but of his being pre-  
 viously the acknowledged patron of military  
 men ; and he never once was termed the apostle  
 of England, or even said to have been in Eng-  
 land, by a single man of learning.

Dr. Ledwich has elsewhere endeavoured to  
 prop up his system of mingled scepticism and ir-  
 religion with the following chimerical assump-  
 tion : “ The christian missionaries found it in-  
 “ dispensably necessary to procure some saint  
 “ under whose protection the inhabitants might  
 “ live secure from temporal and spiritual evils. At  
 “ a loss for a patron, they adopted a practice, de-

\* The learned Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore, in his “ Collection  
 “ of Ancient Ballads,” denies the existence of the patron saint of  
 his country and of the Society of Antiquaries, pronouncing him to  
 be nothing more than a talisman, or character of enchantment.  
 Hence, when the writer of this had, in a Discourse on the King’s  
 Recovery, mentioned St. George as an illustrious saint, his Lordship,  
 in a letter addressed to the editor of the Gentleman’s Magazine,  
 called upon him to produce his proofs of the fact in question. The  
 writer accordingly published “ A Dissertation on the Existence and  
 Character of St. George,” in which he has demonstrated, from the  
 most ancient and authentic monuments, in opposition to the bishop,  
 that there was such a saint ; and that this saint was not the infamous  
 intruder into the see of Alexandria in the time of St. Athanasius,  
 against the assertions of Gibbon the historian. See the Dissertation at  
 Keating and Co’s. It is presumed that the bishop was fully con-  
 vinced of his error, as he is not known to have renewed it since.

† Antiq. p. 59.

‡ In the Council of Oxford, held in 1222.



“ rived from paganism, and pursued it to a great  
 “ extent in the corrupt ages of Christianity \*.—  
 “ Thus of a mountain at Glendaloch a saint was  
 “ made, as of the Shannon, St. Senanus, and of  
 “ Down, St. Dunus†.” When our reverend  
 sceptic first sported this ridicule‡ on the great  
 and good man to whom he is indebted for his  
 civilization, and for whatever he possesses of  
 Christianity, the truly learned and judicious  
 Charles O'Connor was living, who did not fail to  
 call him to a proper account for his scepticism  
 and irreligion. This celebrated antiquary chal-  
 lenged him to prove a single instance of such pa-  
 gan metamorphosis in the ecclesiastical history  
 of Ireland; and, descending to the particulars  
 mentioned by Dr. Ledwich, he shewed that the  
 Shannon, or Senus, was so called many ages be-  
 fore the Christian saint, called Senanus, was  
 born; and with respect to the pretended St.  
 Dunus, he denied that the name of any such  
 saint was to be met with, except amongst the  
 fabrications of Dr. Ledwich§. With as good  
 reason may some writer, a few ages hence, deny

\* Dr. Ledwich has the effrontery to quote Baronius, Ciampini,  
 &c. as approving of such vile and impious frauds, whereas the words  
 of these writers barely imply that the christian bishops were accus-  
 tomed to substitute the names of real saints for those of imaginary  
 deities.

† Antiq. p. 171.

‡ Collectanea de Rebus Hib.

§ Ibid. See Reflections on the Hist. of Ireland by C. O'Connor,  
 Esq. addressed to Col. Vallancey, vol. iii.



that any such personages as a Lord Shannon or a Lord Down existed at the beginning of the 19th century, and may assert that it was the practice of these our times to personify rivers and countries. With a still better shew of reason may the learned, some two hundred years hence, if perchance any account of Dr. Ledwich and his book should reach them, deny that such an egregious sceptic ever could have existed, or at least that he could have been “A REV. “ L. L. D. AND MEMBER OF SEVERAL “ LEARNED SOCIETIES \*.”

Our author, after appearing to quit the field, again returns to it; and, as I have taken up the gauntlet against him on the chapter of St. Patrick, I am bound to return him stroke for stroke as long as he pleases to continue the combat. He denies, then, that this saint is mentioned by any author, or in any work of veracity down to the time of Nennius †, (whom he places 238 years below his date) that is to say, he denies that St. Patrick is so mentioned during more than three centuries and a half from the time of his death.——I answer, first, that if it were reasonable to question the existence of all personages deceased, concerning whom we have no cotemporary, or other authentic records composed within three or four centuries from that in which

\* See the title-page of the Book called, “The Antiquities of Ireland.”

† Antiq. p. 67.



they lived, then we may deny there ever were such men as Romulus, as Cyrus, as Abraham, or as Adam himself. But secondly, the fact itself, asserted by Dr. Ledwich, is demonstrated in my last letter to be grossly false. For, to omit other documents, venerable Bede, who inserts the name of our saint in his martyrology, lived within two centuries from the time of his decease; the four disciples of St. Patrick, who furnished Joceline with his most important materials, were the saint's own cotemporaries; so was St. Fiech, whose hymn in honour of his master yet remains. Nay, the very history of the saint, composed by himself, is still extant, as well as the acts of his councils. I have not yet referred to the important testimony of St. Prosper of Aquitain, a cotemporary of St. Patrick and Pope Celestine, and one of the most celebrated writers of his age. Commending the zeal of this Pope, both in repressing the Pelagian heresy and in propagating the christian faith, he says: "Moreover, the same holy Pope ordained a bishop to the Scottish pagan nation, and thus, whilst he endeavoured to preserve the Roman island (Britain) Catholic, he made the barbarous island (Ireland) Christian\*." I am

\* "Nec signior cura ab hoc eodem morbo (Pelagiana hæresi) Britannias liberavit (Celestinus Papa per Germanum Antissiodorensensem) quando quosdam inimicos gratiæ, solum suæ originis occupantes, etiam ab illo secreto exclusit oceani; et, ordinato Scottis episcopo, dum Romanam insulam studet servare Catholicam, fecit etiam barbaram Christianam." Prosper, lib. contra Collatorem, cap. 41.



not surprised that Dr. Ledwich should always have carefully shunned this irrefragable testimony, since it cuts up his laboured system to the very roots ; for it proves that Ireland was a pagan island before the time of Pope Celestine and St. Patrick ; it proves that this island was converted by a bishop sent thither for that purpose by the said Pope ; and it proves that this bishop must have been no other than St. Patrick, because St. Palladius, whom Prosper mentions as having been sent thither a little before by Pope Celestine on the same errand, did not succeed in the attempt, and therefore crossed over the sea to preach to the Scots in Britain.

Drawing at length towards a conclusion of his long chapter, the writer presents us with an unfaithful translation of two prayers in honour of St. Patrick \*, which translation expresses what they do not say, and omits what they actually say. What is omitted in each of them, is the main hinge upon which these and all the prayers of the Church turn, namely, **THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD**. By this conclusion of her prayers, the Catholic Church professes and practically enforces, that we can neither merit any favour from heaven of ourselves, nor obtain it by the prayers of the saints, except through and on account of the merits and atonement of Jesus Christ. Had our critic been so honest as to have inserted this conclusion of the



prayer, his charge of idolatry against the religion of his ancestors would have struck the most ignorant reader with its absurdity.

Our writer finishes his laborious researches, as he calls them, with a flattering address to the Catholics of Ireland, terming them a liberal and enlightened people, and affirming, "that it is not  
 "possible they should be any longer amused  
 "with fictitious legends, or pay their adoration  
 "to ideal personages, and that (what he calls) a  
 "scriptural, rational, and manly religion, is alone  
 "calculated for their present improvements in  
 "science and manners\*." Here, Sir, we find the key to that mystery of scepticism and absurdity, which we have been viewing with so much astonishment. It is for the sake of depriving the Irish Catholics of their original faith, that Dr. Ledwich takes so much pains to deprive them of the great apostle who preached it to them. The fact, however, is, the Irish Catholics are really too much "enlightened" to become the dupes of such wretched artifices. After having baffled the machinations and withstood the persecutions of almost three centuries in support of the religion *once for all delivered to them by the saints* †, namely, by St. Patrick and his disciples in one of the golden ages of Christianity, they are not likely to make a compliment of it to the cajoling, the declamation, or the sophistry of Dr. Ledwich. On the contrary, I promise myself

\* Antiq. p. 69.

† Jude, v. 3.



that some of them, at least, will keep an eye upon him in future, and not let one of the numberless impieties and errors, with which his book is replete, be again published without a thorough refutation of it.

I am, &c.

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## LETTER XIV.

*Cashel, July 21, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

**I** LEFT my worthy host and the other good people of Thurles with regret, and, at the distance of about a league from it, I stopped for some time to contemplate the beautiful and interesting ruins of Holy Cross. This was an ancient abbey of the order of Cisteaux in Burgundy, being a reformed, or stricter branch of the Benedictine order. Holy Cross was founded by Donald O'Brian, King of Limerick, in the year 1169; though the present ruins exhibit a style of architecture of a later period than his reign by more than a century. Here are seen the noble remains of the gorgeous church, with its mullioned windows, canopied



niches, perforated piscinas, and elaborate sepulchres dispersed throughout the nave, transepts, and side ailes. Here also may be traced the rich sacristy, the strong muniment-house, the solemn chapter-house, the studious cloisters, the sequestered abbot's quarters, the frugal kitchen \*, and various other offices. But all is now a dreary ruin and a wide waste; where a deeper silence reigns than that prescribed by conventual discipline in the twelfth century. For then the church, at least, was seven times in the day responsive to the Great Creator's praise. But now a gloomy and profane muteness has supplanted his worship, even in his temple, which silence is never interrupted except by the discordant voices of impure birds and beasts that shun the day light.—Such is the blessed change which is blasphemously attributed to “the light and spirit of God” in the Book of Homilies! And for making this change the obscene and irreligious Henry is likened to “the pious Josaphat, Josias, and Ezechias! † Well might the poet ask: What must have been the sacrilege of such reformers, when what we now view at Holy Cross was the effect of their piety! ‡.

\* These monks observed a perpetual abstinence from flesh meat, wine, and all delicacies, and they fasted every day in the year, except the Sundays, and within the Paschal time.

† Hom. vol. i. Sermon on Good Works, Part iii.

‡ I cannot forbear quoting at full length the admired passage of the poet here alluded to, describing monastic ruins:

“Who sees these dismal heaps but will demand,  
“What barbarous invader sacked the land?”



The church and monastery of Holy Cross were built for the particular purpose of preserving a portion of the true Cross on which our blessed Saviour suffered death. Certain it is, from ecclesiastical history, that the Christians never lost sight of this precious relic. It was buried by the heathens under a temple of Venus, in the reign of the Emperor Adrian, when he demolished the original city of Jerusalem; but it was found again by the Empress St. Helena, at which time particles of it were distributed throughout christendom\*. The three principal pieces of it were preserved at Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Rome, from each of which small particles were occasionally taken. You will be surprised, Sir, when I tell you that the identical portion of the true Cross, for the sake of which this splendid fane was erected, is now in the possession of my respected friend and fellow traveller, having been preserved from sacrilege, in the reign of Henry VIII. by the Ormond family, and by them transmitted to the family of Kavenagh, a surviving descendant of which has deposited it with my

“ But when he hears no Goth, no Turk, did bring

“ This desolation, but a Christian King;

“ (While nothing but the name of zeal appears

“ ’Twixt our best actions and the worst of theirs)

“ What must he think our sacrilege would spare

“ When such th’ effects of our devotion are?”

*Sir John Denham's Cooper's Hill.*

\* St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, a cotemporary author, Catech. iv. 10, 13.



friend \*. It is by far the largest piece of the Cross I ever met with, being about two inches and a half long, and about half an inch broad, but very thin. It is inserted in the lower shaft of an archiepiscopal cross, made of some curious wood, and inclosed in a gilt case. Had you seen me respectfully saluting that material instrument of my redemption, you would, perhaps, have accused me of idolatry, and yet, Sir, you may recollect, that when you and I and certain other friends visited the British Museum, most of the company kissed the old parchment of Magna Charta upon bended knees, without any imputation of idolatry; and when the miniature of your deceased father, inclosing a relic of his hair, was brought home to you by the artist, you paid it, if I well remember, some such homage of respect and affection. You will tell me that you did not mean, on this occasion, to pay respect to the picture itself, but to the beloved personage whom it recalled to your remembrance; and I admit your plea. But pray, Sir, why may not I avail myself of the same plea, in justification of the respect which I paid to what I believe to have been part of the very wood on which my best friend shed his blood for me. Am I less able to make a distinction between a piece of wood and the great Redeemer, than you are to distinguish between colouring and your deceased

\* I have seen authentic vouchers for these several particulars in the possession of my friend.



parent? Or than the nobles of the land are to distinguish between the empty chair of state, to which they sometimes bow, and the King's person? Or than witnesses in a court of justice are to distinguish between the paper and ink they kiss, and the word of God which these represent to them?

But, to quit the regions of controversy for those of antiquity, having again mounted my chaise at Holy Cross, and proceeded two or three miles in the same western direction in which I came to it, I descried, amongst the clouds, the Rock of Cashel: for so the ancient cathedral of this metropolitical see is called, from the lofty rugged rock upon which it stands. A nearer survey of this awful pile suggests the idea of a castle rather than a church. In fact it was both one and the other. For here the renowned Cormac Cuillinan, who was at the same time King and Archbishop of Munster (being also a celebrated legislator, poet, and saint), erected his royal castle and his metropolitical cathedral close together. The latter he consecrated to God, in honour of St. Patrick, A. D. 900 \*. A much more spacious and elegant cathedral was added to this above two centuries later, being consecrated, and

\* A curious old painting of Cormac in robes, partly royal and partly archiepiscopal, together with his patron St. Patrick, is seen in the new and spacious catholic chapel of the city of Cashel. Though I have followed Ware, Harris, Nicholson, &c. in the date here assigned to Cormac, yet I have some reason to suspect that he lived at a much later period.



a synod held in it, A. D. 1134 : at which time the former church began to be used as a chapter-house. The present cathedral bears intrinsic marks of the age assigned to its erection, namely, the twelfth; as does Cormac's church, now called Cormac's hall, of the tenth. But both these venerable edifices, together with the adjoining palace, have been abandoned by the late archbishops, who have built for themselves a more comfortable residence, and a church more proportioned to the small number of their flock, in a different situation. But the huge pile of building before us, covering, as it does, the native rock, and seeming as if it had been formed out of its summit, does not consist only of the cathedral and the castle, but also of one of those remarkable round towers, which are, in a manner, peculiar to Ireland, and which have exercised the ingenuity of so many antiquaries to explain their original use. This tower, and that at Kilkenny, are the highest I have seen in this country, and stand close to the cathedral, the latter within a few feet of it, while the other actually communicates with it by a door at a considerable height from the ground.

These towers are, as their name imports, perfectly round, both on the outside and in the inside. They are carried up, in this shape, to the height of from 50 to 150 feet\*, and they terminate at the top in a tapering sugar-loaf covering, which is

\* Kilkenny Tower is said by Harris to be 150 feet high.



concave in the inside, and convex on the outside. They are, in général, about 14 feet in the diameter at the bottom, comprehending the thickness of the walls, and about 8 feet in the diameter of the cavity. They decrease insensibly up to the top, where they measure about 6 feet in the interior. There is a door into them, at the height of from 8 to 16 or 20 feet from the ground. They are universally built of stone, tho' not always of the stone which the country affords. The materials of this tower of Cashel are found to have been brought from a considerable distance, and are much better than those of which the cathedral is built. The workmanship of them is excellent, as appears to the eye, and as is proved by their durability. When viewed in the inside, they are found to be perfectly empty. There are, however, holes in the stone work of the walls, into which beams appear to have been heretofore inserted, for forming stories at proper distances, though all these beams are now decayed, and there are a few small loop-holes, perhaps four or five in the whole height, for admitting light into the interior. Near the top of each tower there are usually four of these loop-holes, corresponding in general with the four cardinal points. I must not forget to add, that the Round Towers are always found, either adjoining to churches, or to the site of ancient churches.

From this description of these celebrated towers, I make no doubt but you will form a



accurate an idea of them as if you had actually seen them; and of course you will be qualified to judge of the respective systems of different authors concerning their use. But first to say a few words concerning the period in which they were generally erected. It appears to me that this must be very remote, from the circular arches over the doors of many of them, which proves them to be anterior to the introduction of the pointed arch, from the Saxon zigzags and other ornaments of these door-ways, from the circumstance of the timber which formed the stages in them having entirely mouldered away and disappeared, and from the account which Giraldus Cambrensis gives of them in the 12th century; for he describes them as quite common throughout Ireland, and as being then of a remote antiquity. It seems to me, however, that he himself did not then understand their original use. The prevailing opinion which ascribes the building of them to the Ostmen or Danes, does not seem to be well founded. These invaders never extended their conquests to all the parts of Ireland in which these towers are found. They were not so completely masters of any considerable part of the interior country as to venture upon raising considerable structures in it. These pirates did not build similar towers in England, Normandy, or Sicily, when they conquered those countries, nor did they even build such in their own country, as appears upon inquiry. Finally, the reason assigned for attributing these



works to foreigners, namely, the supposed rudeness of the Irish, is evidently ill founded. For can we suppose that the tutors of the English, French, and Germans, in the learned languages, the sciences, and music, as the Irish are known to have been during four centuries, were incapable of learning how to build plain round towers of stone, when they saw their scholars all around them erecting stately churches and monasteries of stone; most of which we are assured were ornamented with towers.

Some persons have conceived the Round Towers of Ireland to have been built as places of security. I grant that a single person might defend himself in one of these *cæteris paribus* against a single enemy; but the man who had the means of erecting a tower of this nature would want space for many other defenders, and for many persons to be defended besides himself.—Other conjecturers have supposed they were intended for pharos, or beacons.—But not to mention that they are frequently placed in low situations, and that two or three of them are sometimes found to stand near together; the apertures at the top of them are not large enough to transmit any considerable body of light; being very different, in this respect, from our modern light houses.—A third opinion, which is that of the learned Vallancey and others, is, that they were made by the Phœnicians or Carthaginians, in their commercial visits to Ireland, as Pyra-theia, or fire-altars.—But to answer this pur-



pose there was no occasion of carrying them up to so great a height; and they ought rather to have been left open at the top, like our great furnaces, than closed up as they are found to be. —A fourth system is, that they were built for watch-houses, in which guards were stationed to give notice, by trumpets, or other means, of the approach of enemies or thieves; and certainly if these towers had been placed near the castles which were built in the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries throughout Ireland, there would not want tolerable good authority to support this system in a passage of a well-informed author of the 16th century which has generally been overlooked\*. —But as they are universally found near churches or chapels, or at least near the site of ancient churches or chapels, and as they are not always even in elevated situations, I cannot admit them to have been watch-towers. —A fifth hypothesis is, that of Molyneux and Dr. Ledwich†, who maintains that they were built for belfries to the churches near which they are

\* Stanyhurst describing the manners of the Irish says: "*Imprimis autem castellano præsidio se tuentur, ne, illis quiescentibus, nocturna vis inferatur. Quare, ut tale quiddam incommodi de nocte non accidat, habent in castelli vertice, tanquam in specula, excubias, quæ sæpissime vociferant, et in frequentibus clamoribus majorem partem noctis vigilant. Atque has vociferationes idcirco iterant ut nocturnis furibus et viatoribus significant patrem familias non ita graviter dormire quin promptus sit hostes a suis laribus viriliter ejicere.*"—*De Rebus in Hib. Gestis*, p. 33.

† See his Dissertation in Collectanea, vol. ii. also his chapter on Round Towers, in his Antiquities, p. 155, &c.



placed.—In opposition to this assertion I have to observe, that none of these towers is large enough for a single bell of a moderate size to swing round in it; that from the whole of their form and dimensions, and from the smallness of the apertures in them, they are rather calculated to stifle than to transmit to a distance any sound that is made in them; lastly, that though possibly a small bell may have been accidentally put up in one or two of them, at some late period \*, yet we constantly find other belfries or contrivances for hanging bells in the churches adjoining to them. In the mean time, we can derive no information from the earliest writer who takes notice of the towers, except that they were common throughout Ireland, that they were of great antiquity in the 12th century, and that they were considered to be built for some religious purpose †.

\* Dr. Ledwich tells us, from Mr. Smith, that the Round Tower at Ardmore has been, at some period, used to hang a bell in, as appears by three “pieces of oak still remaining near the top of it,” and by “two channels which are cut in the sill of the door where “the rope went out, the ringer standing below the door on the “outside,” *Antiq.* p. 163. But if these pieces of oak were coeval with the tower, it is unaccountable that they should have remained entire while the beams in every other tower have mouldered away. Again, what reason can Dr. Ledwich assign why there are not holes in the sills of every other tower.—In a word, the ancient architects were too wise to place the bell under cover and the ringer in the open air.

† Giraldus giving a fabulous account of the origin of the lake called Lough-Neagh, which, he says, was caused by the overflowing of a fountain, that on a sudden deluged a large tract of land



The idea, Sir, which first struck me, upon attentively surveying these towers, was the same which I have since learnt was adopted by Dean Richardson and the learned Harris, namely, that they were built as habitations for a certain set of anchorites, called *Inclusi*, or *Cellani*. We otherwise know that such recluses were often found close to the churches of Ireland in ancient times. An early model of anchorites was St. John the Baptist, who passed his life in the deserts of Judea, clothed with a hair-cloth, and living upon locusts and wild honey \*. Afterwards, we find a Paul the Hermit, an Antony, an Hilarion, and a crowd of other solitaries, who filled the deserts of Egypt and Syria. The greater part of these lived in monasteries, but several of them resided by themselves in caves, or upon the tops of mountains, or in other situations almost inaccessible. At length, in the fourth century, one of them, St. Simon, a Syrian, to prevent the interruption of visitants, and to lead a more mortified life, caused a pillar to be erected 40 cubits high, and three feet in diameter, at the top of

and destroyed a wicked race of people, adds that, in calm weather, the fishermen of the lake are accustomed to point out "the tall narrow ecclesiastical round towers, peculiar to Ireland, under the water: " *Piscatores aquæ illius turres ecclesiasticas, quæ, more patriæ, arctæ sunt et altæ, nec non et rotundæ, sub undis manifeste, sereno tempore conspiciunt et extraneis transeuntibus, reique causas admirantibus frequenter ostendunt.*" Topograph. Hib. Dist. ii. c. 9.

\* Mark i. 4. Luke i. 8.



which he passed the last 20 years of his life \*. His example was followed by others, and an order called Stylites, from their living upon pillars, subsisted in the East till it was desolated by the Saracens. An attempt was made to lead the same kind of life in the West by one Vulfilaic, a native of Lombardy, who undertook to live upon a column, near Triers, in Germany. But the German bishops judging this practice to be too singular in itself, and too rigorous for these climates, put a stop to it, and obliged the new Stylite to descend from his column †. It is well known that the number of the recluses, together with their austerity and abstraction from the things of this world, was in no part of the western church so great as in Ireland, during the first four centuries after its conversion ‡. This being so, what wonder that those amongst them who resided near the churches, for the sake of approaching to the sacraments, should wish to raise their cells into the air, to be thus more retired from the crowds which frequented the churches, and also to imitate, as closely as this northern climate would

\* Amongst other vouchers for this extraordinary fact is the famous church historian Theodoret, who professes to have been perfectly well acquainted with the saint.—The Stylite, as he was called, was, from time to time, furnished with a small quantity of food from below, and he reposed against certain rails which surrounded the top of the pillar when he slept.

† Greg. Turon. Hist. l. viii. c. 15.

‡ Harris has furnished us with a long list of Irish anchorets or Includi, though it is evident he could not get to a knowledge of one thousandth part of their number.



permit, the famous St. Simeon and the other Stylites of the East \*. By living within the column instead of the outside of it, they avoided the ostentation which the western bishops objected to, and by having a covering over their heads, they were protected from the greatest severity of the weather ; as it was indispensably necessary they should be in this northern climate. If we examine the door-ways of the towers, we find them universally raised from the ground, generally to the height of from eight to twenty feet. Hence we may conclude that they were not made to be easily entered into, or for any of the ordinary purposes of life. They are also generally ornamented in the Saxon style ; because the ceremony of introducing the anchorite into the door of that cell, from which he was no more to go out, like a monastic profession, was conducted with much solemnity †. It required a ladder to get into the tower, which the recluse, of

\* It is certain that St. Simeon's *στύλη* was round, and though Raderus speaks of the cells usually built for the Includi of Bavaria as being square, yet, it is certain, that in a matter of optional devotion, such as the one in question, there was no fixed ecclesiastical law. I have observed that the piers for supporting large doors and gates, as also many other buildings in Ireland, are made in a circular form with a conical cap upon them. Whence could this singular style have been derived, except from the round towers ? And from what models are the round towers themselves copied, except from the columns of the eastern anchorites ?

† In the life of St. Raynerus the Anchorite, it is said : "Cum multa devotione et reverentia clausus est inclusorio juxta ostium majoris ecclesiæ."



course, drew up after him when he entered, and which would be equally necessary for him to ascend or to descend from one story to another. He would occupy which ever story suited the weather, his health, or his devotion; but he would undoubtedly receive the priest, who came to communicate him, or the charitable person who brought him provisions, or the pious Christian who sought his advice \* in the lower apartment, next to the door.

Upon the whole, Sir, I have no sort of doubt that these curious and singular monuments of Irish antiquity were built for the habitation of anchorites, within a century or two after the conversion of the island. They are admirably well adapted and situated for the purposes of these recluses, and they bear as near a resemblance as circumstances would permit with the *στυλαι* of the admired Syrian hermits. It is impossible to shew what other purpose they were calculated for, and it is equally impossible to discover the vestiges of any other *Clusoriæ* in the neighbourhood of the great churches; which, however, we know to have heretofore existed near many of them. But, after all, the present

\* We learn from St. Bernard that St. Malachy, afterwards Archbishop of Armagh, in the 12th century, applied for religious instruction, when a youth, to a holy solitary, by name Imarus, who was shut up in a cell near the cathedral of the said city, probably in a round tower. St. Bern. in vita St. Malach. c. 2.



antiquarian disquisition is insignificant compared with that which I am next required to enter upon, namely, what species of Christianity was originally preached to the Irish nation?

I am, &c.

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## LETTER XV.

*Cashel, July 23, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

IN treating of the important subject of antiquity, which I announced at the conclusion of my last letter, I have to combat two principal adversaries, being persons of very different characters, attainments, and systems; but, nevertheless, combined together in the same cause, that of robbing the Irish Catholics of their ancient faith. These persons are Archbishop Usher and Dr. Ledwich. They both maintain that the original Christianity of Ireland was not Catholic, but rather the reverse of it. They are, however, in very different and inconsistent stories with respect to the source and



nature of this Christianity, as will appear from the following abstract of their respective systems. Archbishop Usher says : “ Unquestionably there  
 “ was a missionary from Rome, of the name of  
 “ Patrick, who, together with his disciples,  
 “ converted the greater part of our Irish ances-  
 “ tors from Paganism to Christianity, about the  
 “ middle of the fifth century. All history attests  
 “ it, and it would be madness to deny it. But I  
 “ can prove, from the very acts of this apostle,  
 “ from venerable Bede, and other ancient doc-  
 “ tors of the Church, that the religion then im-  
 “ ported by St. Patrick was different in its essen-  
 “ tial parts from that professed by the Catholics  
 “ at the present time.”——On the other hand,  
 Dr. Ledwich exclaims : “ Away with the phan-  
 “ toms invented by missionaries of the ninth  
 “ century, in imitation of Mars, Minerva, and  
 “ Juno. There never was such a man at all as St.  
 “ Patrick, the apostle of Ireland ; and it is cer-  
 “ tain that the Irish were converted to a religion  
 “ the very reverse of Popery, by certain un-  
 “ known preachers from Asia ; which pure reli-  
 “ gion continued in Ireland down to the year  
 “ 1152. As to Ware, Harris, and Primate Usher,  
 “ they had not even a tolerable idea of our origi-  
 “ nal episcopacy\* ; and when they appeal to the  
 “ testimony of Bede and the English Saxon  
 “ church, in opposition to Popery, they appeal to  
 “ acknowledged Papists.”——I shall first pay

\* See Antiq. p. 87.



attention to the arguments of the Archbishop, as they are detailed by Harris, after which I shall again notice the declamations of Ledwich \*: the occasion, however, requires that I should compress both the former and the latter, as likewise my answers, within as small a compass as possible.

I. It is urged by Usher, that the Christianity which prevailed in the age of St. Patrick. and a considerable time afterwards, could not be the religion of modern Catholics, because the poet Sedulius in the fifth century, and our venerable Bede in the eighth, strongly recommended the reading of the holy scriptures. — But does the Catholic Church in these times forbid the reading of them? — On the contrary, she imposes a strict obligation of reading them upon all her clergy, and she interdicts the practice to no one, but only expresses a desire that they who apply to it may have some previous tincture of literature, or at least that they may be possessed of a docile and humble mind, so as to be willing to admit her interpretation of the many things *hard to be understood* †, which occur in them. In the mean time, I might quote whole volumes of passages from the Fathers ‡

\* See a Dissertation annexed to the Life of St. Patrick.

† 2 Pet. iii. 16.

‡ See in particular amongst St. Patrick's cotemporaries, St. Basil, Lib. de Spir. S. c. 27. St. John Chrys. in Orat. 4. in Epist. ad Thessal. and St. Vincent of Lerins, in the whole of his golden work, called, *Commonitorium adversus profanas Hæreseon novitates*.



and Councils\* of the Church, belonging to the ages in question, by way of proving that they admitted certain unwritten apostolical traditions as the word of God, equally with the written Bible, and that they unanimously rejected from their communion, *as heathens and publicans*, all those who *refused to hear the Church* †.—

II. It is objected by Usher, that what is called St. Patrick's Purgatory was not instituted by the saint of that name ‡.—This I readily grant ; but if he argues from thence, that St. Patrick and the early Christians did not believe in a middle state of souls after death, which may be assisted by the prayers of living Christians, he is guilty of an error both in reasoning and in fact. It will be seen in this saint's second council, that he forbids the holy sacrifice to be offered up for those persons after their death, who had render-

\* See in particular the speech of St. Wilfrid, commended by Bede, Hist. l. iii. c. 27. also the decrees of the synods of Herudford, l. iv. c. 5. and of Hedfield, l. iv. c. 17. Sir Richard Musgrave, referring to the assertions of Usher, which he recommends to the consideration of Catholics, takes upon himself to assert, that “ until Archbishop Anselm's time, (namely, the 12th century) the Irish clergy “ were totally ignorant of the councils of the Church, and derived “ their knowledge of Christianity for near 800 years from no other “ source but the Bible.” *Memoirs of the Rebellion*, p. 2. It is not by way of entering into a controversy with Sir R. Musgrave that I notice this revolting falsehood, but only by way of shewing Sir Richard's propensity to assert with the utmost confidence facts that he is totally ignorant of.

† Matt. xviii. 17.

‡ It was set on foot by an Abbot Patrick several ages later, and was once suppressed by an order of the Pope, in 1497.



ed themselves unworthy to have it offered up for them in their life time\*. The writings of Bede abound with testimonies in favour of prayers for the dead, of purgatory, &c.† and he himself, when he came to die, earnestly desired that prayers and masses might be offered up for him ‡. —III. It is said that St. Patrick condemned the worship of images.—It is true, he condemned and extirpated the use of pagan idols; but there is not the shadow of an argument that he deviated from the received doctrine and practice of the Universal Church with respect to the paying a proper reverence to the cross of Christ, his image, or the images or relics of the martyrs and saints, or with respect to the pious usage of desiring the saints to offer up prayers for us. At the time when St. Patrick arrived in Ireland, he saw the cross of Christ exalted upon the imperial standards, and he left the great doctors of Christianity, a Chrysostom, an Augustine, a Prosper, and a Leo, bearing ample testimony to the piety and utility of these practices §. He himself is recorded for bringing relics into this island ||. With respect to our native historian and theologian, Venerable Bede, he describes St. Augustine of Canterbury preaching the gospel to King

\* 2 Concil. S. Patricii, cap. 12. Spelman, Concil. p. 57.

† Hist. l. iv. c. 22. l. iii. c. 19

‡ Cuthbert in Vit. Bed. Act. Bened. tom. 3.

§ See the Liturgy of St. Chrysost. Aug. Sermon. 25. de Sanctis, &c. Prosper de Vita Contemplat. c. iv. Leo Sermon. de S. Vinc.

|| Jocelin.



Ethelbert, with the cross for an ensign, and the figure of Christ for an emblem \*; he represents the same saint consecrating pagan temples with holy water and relics †, and offering up homage to God by the sacrifice of the mass ‡. With respect to images in particular, Venerable Bede proves that God did not interdict the total use of them, by his commanding the figures of cherubims and oxen to be placed in the temple: “for certainly,” he adds, “if it was lawful to “make twelve oxen of brass to support the “brazen sea, it cannot be amiss to paint the “twelve apostles going to preach to all nations§.”—IV. We are told that the liturgy of St. Patrick differed from that of the Roman Church.—It is not, however, proved to have differed, in the smallest tittle, from that which was followed at Rome when St. Patrick received his mission; much less is it proved to have deviated in any point which is essential to the nature of the sacraments and sacrifice of the church in all ages and countries. That the catholic liturgies of all times and countries have been essentially the same in this respect, is abundantly proved by divines and canonists ||. Nevertheless, it is to be remarked, that a certain

\* Lib. i. c. 25.

† Lib. i. c. 26.

‡ Lib. i. c. 30.

§ De Templo Salom. cap. 19.

|| See Explication de la Messe, par Le Brun, Goarius, Morinus, &c.



latitude in mere ceremonies and particular devotions has always been allowed to great or national churches, under the regulation of their head pastors. St. Gregory permitted our apostle, St. Augustine, to adopt any usages of this nature for the infant church of the English, which he might choose to borrow from the French or other catholic nations\*; and the court of Rome at the present day, so far from requiring the orthodox Greeks who have colleges there to conform to her ritual in these unessential points, obliges them to adhere to their own.—

V. It appears that mass was sometimes, in former ages, said by the Irish clergy at night.—So it was, in the same ages and on the same occasions, namely, on the eves of certain great festivals, by the clergy of every other catholic country. It is still said by them at midnight on Christmas night. In the mean time, we learn from Bede that nine of the clock in the morning was the usual time of saying it†.—VI. Bede and Cogitosus speak of “the sacrament of the Lord’s body and blood:” whence it appears that the sacrament was in ancient times administered in both kinds.—I answer, that the Catholics use the same language at the present day, though the laity receive the sacrament only under one kind; that the difference in this respect is a mere point of discipline, which may be and has been changed as the circum-

\* Hist. Ecc. l. i. c. 27.

† Hora tertia. Hist. Eccl. l. iv. c. 22.



stances of time and place required, and that, nevertheless, the present practice of the Church, in communicating the laity under the form of bread alone, was the practice of our infant English church, as appears from Bede himself \*. In the mean time, we are to observe that this illustrious doctor of the English church, at the beginning of the ninth century, expressly teaches, not only that the mass is a true sacrifice, in which Christ is truly and really present, but also that a true and proper change or **TRANSUBSTANTIATION** of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ takes place in it. I will transcribe his words in the margin, and I defy the subtilty of the most disingenuous controvertist of your acquaintance to give them any other meaning than that which I have assigned †.—VII. Archbishop Lanfranc complains that the Irish neg-

\* See the History of the Sons of Sabereth, l. ii. c. 5.

† “*Lavat nos (Christus) a peccatis nostris quotidie in sanguine suo, cum ejusdem beatæ passionis memoria ad altare replicatur, cum panis et vini creaturæ in sacramentum carnis et sanguinis ejus, ineffabili spiritus sanctificatione TRANSFERTUR : sicque corpus et sanguinis illius non infidelium manibus ad perniciem ipsorum funditur et occiditur, sed fidelium ore, suam sumitur ad salutem.*”  
 Bed. Hom. in Epiph. tom. 7.—As the doctrine of the eastern church is particularly implicated in the present controversy, I shall select, from amongst scores of other testimonies relating to it, a passage from the catechistical discourses of a holy father who was bishop of the primitive church of Jerusalem in the fourth century: “The bread and wine of the eucharist, before the invocation of the adorable Trinity, were mere bread and wine ; but that invocation having taken place, the bread becomes the body of Christ, and the wine becomes the blood of Christ.—Since, then, Christ thus declares concerning the bread: **THIS IS MY BODY**, who can



lected the use of chrism in baptism, or did not make use of it in a proper manner, and that a single bishop amongst them was accustomed to consecrate another bishop, without the presence of two others, as the Council of Nice requires.—But what trifling, Sir, is this ! For since it is evident that Lanfranc did not, on this account, deny the validity of the Irish baptisms and orders, and since both Catholics and Protestants are agreed that chrism is not essential to baptism, nor the presence of three bishops to consecration, it is plain that the diversity in question neither was, nor was considered as a sufficient ground for the rest of the Church to break off communion with the prelates of this island.—

VIII. In order to prove that the clergy were permitted in ancient times to marry, and that therefore the Church then was upon a different footing from what it is now, Archbishop Usher mentions that St. Patrick was the son of the deacon Calphurnius, who himself was the son of the priest Potitus.—I answer, that if the learned primate had acted fairly by his readers, he would have informed them that the same author who mentions these particulars concerning St. Patrick's family expressly tells us that the children of Cal-

“doubt any longer? And since he confirms what he said, and declares  
 “THIS IS MY BLOOD, who will dare to hesitate, and affirm that  
 “it is not his blood? He once changed water into wine, which re-  
 “sembles blood, at Cana in Galilee; and is he not worthy to be  
 “believed, when he says that he changes wine into blood?” &c.  
 St. Cyril of Jerusal. Catech. Mystagog. i. See also the Liturgy of St.  
 Basil, and of St. Chrys. in Le Brun, &c.



phurnius and Potitus were born *previously to their father's ordination* \*.

To prevent being obliged to return again to the same subject, I shall here take notice of some of the extravagant assertions of Dr. Ledwich concerning it. He says that the ancient Irish monks called Culdees, were married †; in proof of which he quotes an authority of still less weight than his own, the assertion of the well-known deistical writer in the last century, Toland. To be sure, a monastery of 3000 monks, as was that of Bencchor under St. Comgal ‡, with each one a wife and family, was admirably calculated for the observance of those austere rules of obedience, silence, abstemiousness, poverty, chastity, &c. which Dr. Ledwich admits them to have practised; having borrowed them, as he tells us, not from the monks of Egypt, but from the more ancient heathen priests of Egypt § ! He says, however, that “when it came to their turn to officiate they did not cohabit with their wives; as “ by the 28th canon of the African code, “ subdeacons, who handle the holy mysteries, “ deacons, priests, and bishops are directed, at “ their several terms, to abstain from their wives: “ a practice derived from Egypt to the Jews, and “ from them adopted by the Christians. Celi- “ bacy was unknown for the first three hundred “ years of the Church ||.” What a mass of misrepresentation and falsehood is here heaped to-

\* Joceline.

† Antiq. p. 111.

‡ Ibid. p. 90.

§ Ibid.

|| Ibid. pp. 111, 112.



gether!—In the first place, by Ledwich's own account, the monks in general, and the Culdees in particular, "had no office in the Church; even " the abbots had not priesthood till the 12th century \*." St. Columba is mentioned as an exception to this rule. Hence their "turn to officiate," according to this author himself, "never " came round." 2dly, The antiquary most shamefully imposes upon the reader in what he pretends to quote from the 28th canon of the African code. The canon here mentioned has no relation whatever with the matter in question. In the 25th canon, however, of that code, it is thus decreed: "In conformity with what had " been established in former councils, it is our " order that subdeacons, deacons, priests, and " bishops, shall abstain from their wives, and " be as if they had none: and if they act otherwise, they shall be removed from their office †." In the council of Nice ‡, the council of Arles §, and other councils, it was forbidden to bishops, priests, and deacons, to have any woman at all in their houses, except a mother, a

\* Antiq. pp. 111, 112.

† "Placuit quod in diversis conciliis firmatum est, ut subdiàconi qui sacra mysteria contrectant et diaconi et presbyteri, sed et episcopi, secundum priora statuta, etiam ab uxoribus se contineant, ut tanquam non habentes videantur esse: quod nisi fecerint ab ecclesiastico removeantur officio." Integer Codex Canonum Ecc. Afric. Can. 25. Concil. Labbe, tom. ii. p. 1061.

‡ Nicen. Can. 2.

§ 2 Arelat. Can. 3.



sister, or some very near relation. 3dly, The writer equally imposes upon those who trust to him, in what he says about the derivation of continency from pagan priests. If those illustrious prelates who framed the African code, Aurelius, St. Augustine, St. Alypius, &c. to whose authority he has just now appealed, are to be believed, this observance is derived from the apostles\*. Nor does he less aim at deceiving, when he asserts, that “celibacy was unknown for the first 300 years of the Church.” For does not St. Paul teach that, though *he that giveth his virgin in marriage does well*, yet that *he who giveth her not does better* †. Does he not intimate that he himself was unmarried? Is there a single father of the Church, from the first to the last of them, who has not written in commendation of virginity ‡? St. Jerome, who flourished in the fourth age, testifies that

\* “Cum præterito concilio de continentia et castitatis moderamine tractaretur, gradus isti tres qui constrictione quadam castitatis per consecrationes adnexi sunt, episcopos, presbyteros et diaconos, ita complacuit, ut concederet sacros antistites ac Dei sacerdotes, nec non et levitas, vel qui sacramentis divinis in serviant, continentes esse in omnibus, quo possint simpliciter quod a Domino postulant impetrare, ut quod apostoli docuerant, et ipsa servavit antiquitas nos quoque custodiamus.” Codex Afric. Can. 3. Labb. t. ii. p. 1052.

† 1 Cor. vii. 38.

‡ I shall satisfy myself with here mentioning, that the illustrious doctor and martyr St. Cyprian, in the 3d century, wrote a whole book, as several later fathers also did, in commendation of virginity. In the same century, the great Origen declares thus: “Videtur mihi quod illius est solius offerre sacrificium indesinens qui indesinenti et perpetuæ se voverit castitati.” Hom. 23. in Num.



it was the established rule in the three great patriarchates of Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome, to admit no persons into their clergy, but those who either never had been married, or who had renounced the married state\*. With respect to our English church at the end of the sixth century, we gather from St. Gregory's permission for the clerks in minor orders to take wives†, that this was unlawful for the clergy in holy orders, namely, for bishops, priests, and deacons, agreeably to a well known rule of reasoning‡; and we are justified in inferring the same with respect to the Irish clergy in St. Patrick's time, from a certain canon in one of his councils§. But I fear I have tired you with the length of this polemical letter, which, however, I could not shorten, in

\* " Quid facient orientis ecclesiæ, quid Egypti et Sedis Apostolicæ, quæ aut virgines clericos accipiunt aut continentes; aut si uxores habuerint mariti esse desistunt?" St. Hieron. Epist. ad-versus Vigilant.—St. Epiphanius delivers much the same testimony. Expos. Fid. Cath.

† " Si qui sunt clerici EXTRA SACROS ORDINES constituti, qui se continere non possunt, sortiri uxores debent et stipendia sua exterius accipere." Resp. 1. St. Greg. St. Aug. Bed. Hist. Ecc. l. i. c. 27.

‡ " Exceptio confirmat regulam."

§ " De Tribus seminibus Evangeliorum, cap. 18.—Centesium episcopi et doctores qui omnibus omnia sunt; sexagesimum clerici et viduæ quæ continentes sunt, tricesimum laici qui fideles sunt, qui perfecte Trinitatem credunt. His amplius non est in messe Domini. Monachi vero et virgines eum centismus jungimus." Synod. 2. St. Patricii. Spelman, p. 58. It is evident that continency is here represented as an attribute of the clergy and of widows, on account of which they are entitled to a sixty-fold reward.



justice to the important points of antiquarian research which it treats of. For the present, then,

I remain, &c.

## LETTER XVI.

*Cashel, July 25, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

HAVING undertaken so desperate a cause as that of proving the religion of St. Patrick and his converts not to have been the Catholic, no wonder Archbishop Usher, with all his talents, should have failed in it; no wonder his adversary Fitzsimons, having the works of the fathers at his elbow, should have gained so decided a victory over him, and that the perusal of their respective writings should have determined the Archbishop's descendant, the Rev. James Usher, to become a Catholic, as I have related in one of my first letters to you. Soon after this controversy, it became the fashion with protestant disputants, following in this the famous Chillingworth, to make light of the



ancient doctors and councils of the Church, and to appeal to the scriptures alone in every religious controversy ; or rather, as the fact is, to that meaning which every man chooses to put upon the scriptures. The most important, however, of Usher's objections, remains to be examined : he denies that St. Patrick and his disciples acknowledged the Pope's spiritual supremacy. If this be true, undoubtedly their religion was not Catholic ; for it is their union with the successor of St. Peter, as their visible head here upon earth, which does and ever has kept the members of the great *Catholic* or *Universal* Church, spread as it is all over the Universe, in one faith and one communion.

Admitting, as Usher does, that St. Patrick received his orders and his commission to preach to the Irish from the See of Rome, no less than St. Palladius, St. Ninian, and St. Augustine, the respective apostles of the Scots, Picts, and English ; admitting also, that St. Patrick afterwards undertook a journey thither in the year 461, to give an account of the success of his embassy, it is unaccountable that the prelate should deny our saint to have acknowledged any general superintendency in the Roman Pontiff. On this subject, at least, he cannot pretend to fortify himself with the example and authority of the British, English, French, or other western churches, nor even with the example and authority of those in Asia and the other eastern regions. The British bishops had assisted at the



great council of Arles and the general council of Sardica, in both of which, more particularly in the latter, the superior jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome was recognized \*. On no one occasion did the British or Welsh bishops deny the supremacy of the See of Rome, though in their first conference with St. Augustine they refused to admit him as their archbishop†: a resolution, however, which they did not adhere to‡. With respect to the Irish church, though free from the destruction of its records by the Danes, we have but few monuments of it during several ages, yet it is evident that its prelates continued to be subject to the Pope, and to apply to him as their superior on all matters of consequence. We have two letters of St. Gregory the Great to the bishops of Ireland, written by him in answer to questions which they had proposed to him upon various ecclesiastical subjects§. Near fifty years after this, we find the Irish prelates, priests, and

\* Restitutus, Bishop of London, Eborius of York, and Adelphius Colonia Londinensium (perhaps Maldon), assisted at the council of Arles A. D. 314, which council sent its acts to Pope Silvester, desiring that he would cause them to be every where observed. In the œcumenical or general council of Sardica, at which our British Bishop, Restitutus, again assisted, the right of appeals to the Bishop of Rome in causes of great importance, from all parts of the Church, was acknowledged. Can. iii. and Can. vii.

† Bede Hist. l. ii. c. 2.

‡ We learn from Usher himself, that both St. Theliau and St. Oudoceus, successive bishops of Llandaff, came to Canterbury to be consecrated by St. Augustine. Usher in Indice. Chronolog. Had they persisted in refusing submission to the See of Canterbury, this would not prove they denied the Pope's supremacy.

§ St. Greg. Regist. Epist. Lib. ii. Ep. 36. Lib. ix. Ep. 61.



abbots, consulting Pope Severinus upon the old subject, the right time of keeping Easter ; to whom an answer, written with the tenderness, and at the same time with the authority of a father, was returned, in the name of his successor, Pope John\*. Indeed, Cummiānus, a cotemporary writer, in his Life of Abbot Segenius, speaking of certain envoys sent by the Irish prelates about this time to the Apostolic See, says : “ We deputed  
 “ some persons of tried prudence and humility  
 “ to Rome, like children to their mother†.” It is not improbable that these deputies were the abbot Lasrean, with his companions, who, to the number of fifty persons, about this period went to Rome, where Lasrean was ordained bishop, and ordered back to Ireland with legatine jurisdiction‡.

You will recollect, Sir, what number of learned and devout Irish scholars, during the several ages in question, spread themselves over our island, and the whole continent of Europe, not excepting Italy itself, as I have shewn in one of my former letters to you. Now can it be supposed that these would have been hospitably received, and placed at the head of monasteries and colleges, as they generally were, if they had differed from the great body of Christians in any essential point, particularly in the leading

\* Bede l. ii. c. 19.

† Usher in Sylog. Epist. Hib.

‡ Usher in Indice. Chronol.



one regarding the Pope's supremacy? Common sense revolts at the idea. But, says Dr. Ledwich, who on this point makes common cause with Usher: we have proofs that one of the most celebrated Irish scholars and saints of his age, the Abbot Columbanus, "charged Pope Boniface III. with heresy, and suspected his Church to be in error.—In another letter he entreated to be permitted to retain his national customs. — But clerical resentment is not soon appeased: our missionary was expelled his abbey: after which he returned to Bobbio, in Italy, and erected a monastery there\*." In this account of the matter in question Dr. Ledwich is guilty of more numerous and gross errors than those were which Columbanus fell into. The latter, being shut up in his monastic solitude, had been totally misinformed concerning the famous question of the Three Chapters, and of the Second Council of Constantinople, in which this had been decided, as likewise concerning the conduct of the deceased Pope Vigilius, who, he had been led to believe, encouraged Nestorianism. Hence he exhorted the reigning Pope to clear himself and his see from these imputations, by a clear exposition of his faith—an advice perfectly consistent with the submission due from an inferior to his superior. So far, however, from breaking communion with the Church of Rome, or ac-

\* Antiq. p. 352.



cusing it of heresy, this holy solitary expressly declared, in the very letter in question, that “there is no other faith but that of the Roman Church, that this Church never espoused the cause of any heretic, and that he himself continued indivisibly attached to the Chair of St. Peter \*.” Other less important errors into which Dr. Ledwich falls in the above quoted passage, but which shew his inaccuracy, are the following.—The letter was not addressed to Boniface III. but to Boniface IV †.—It was not in this, but in a former letter to the Pope, that Columban requested to be left to his national observance of Easter: a singular petition this from a pious abbot to an heretical prelate, with whom he is supposed to break off communion! The letter in question was not written from Luxeu, in Burgundy, but from Bobbio, in Italy ‡. St. Columban was not expelled from the former place in consequence of the freedom of his letter to the Pope, or of any other kind of “clerical resentment §;” but in consequence of the resentment of a libidinous King, Theodoric, and an ambitious Princess, Brunehault, whose crimes he was obliged to reprove ||.

\* Bibliotheca Petrum, tom. xii.

† Dom. Cellier. Hist. des Auteurs Sacr. tom. xvii. p. 489.

‡ Ibid.

§ I hope the Rev. Dr. L. will not manifest any of this “clerical resentment” at the present exposure of his numerous gross errors.

|| Mabillon Annal. Bened. t. ii.



Our antiquary, on various occasions, shews the greatest earnestness to derive the religion of his native island from oriental rather than from Roman missionaries. But if he had any proofs, or plausible arguments, which he has not, that the fact were as he wishes it to be, this would not help his cause, in as much as the Greek and the Latin churches professed and maintained an unity of faith and ecclesiastical government, the most essential part of which was the spiritual supremacy of the See of Rome, during all the ages in question; namely, from the beginning of the Church down to the oriental Greek schism, in the year 866. Hence the most illustrious prelates and patriarchs, as St. Athanasius of Alexandria, SS. Chrysostom and Flavian, of Constantinople, &c. appealed to the Bishop of Rome for the time being, as to the acknowledged head of the Universal Church, against the injuries they received from other prelates in conformity with the above-mentioned canons of the General Council of Sardica\*, and by so doing met with the redress they sought for. What man of learning now can, without indignation, look upon the following passage of Dr. Ledwich's book, in which, endeavouring to prove a religious conformity, in the second century, between the churches of these islands and those of Asia, and their common opposition to that of Rome, he writes thus concerning St. Irenæus, who was a Greek by

\* Can. iii. and Can. viii.



birth, and had conversed with St. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John the Evangelist, but who then was Bishop of Lyons in France: “Irenæus, “in the second century, loudly complains of “Roman innovations, *that the schismatics at “Rome had corrupted the sincere law of the “Church*, which led to the greatest impieties. “These opinions, adds he, the Presbyters who “lived before our times, who were also the disciples of the apostles, did in no wise deliver. “I who saw and heard the blessed Polycarp, am “able to protest in the presence of God, that if “that apostolic presbyter had heard these things, “he would have stopped his ears, and cried out, “according to his custom: Good God! for “what times hast thou reserved me, that I “should suffer such things. He would have “fled from the place where he was sitting “or standing, should he have heard these “things\*.”

To say nothing of the alterations and mutilations † which Dr. Ledwich is guilty of in translating this passage from the Greek, I affirm that he here knowingly and deliberately imposes upon the public in a point of the utmost importance. For he knows that what Eusebius quotes from the work of St. Irenæus, now lost, does not re-

\* Antiq. p. 56, and in Index.

† Amongst other omissions Dr. L. suppresses the circumstance that Florinus, the innovator in question, was himself an Asiatic priest.



gard the Church of Rome itself, but certain schismatics called Blastus and Florinus, who were cut off from its communion, and degraded from the priestly office \* on account of their errors. The former taught, amongst other errors, that of the Quartodecimans concerning the time of keeping Easter†, which error Dr. Ledwich so frequently preconizes; the latter was a Valentinian heretic, and a precursor of Manes, in denying that God created whatever evil there is found in the world‡. It was against the latter innovator that St. Irenæus exerted himself with so much force, reminding him of the time when they were joint hearers of the holy Bishop of Symrna, St. Polycarp, and affirming that if the master of the latter, St. John the Evangelist, were alive, and heard such doctrines as Florinus taught, he would express his indignation against them in the terms above quoted§. As to the Church itself of Rome, so far from representing it as schismatical, St. Irenæus, as Eusebius himself testifies, openly exhibits it as the standard of truth, and the depository of apostolical traditions; enumerating, for that purpose, the succession of its bishops, from St. Peter down to

\* Φλώρινος πρεσβυτερίου της εκκλησίας αποπεσών. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. v. c. 15. Tertul. Præscrip. c. 53.

† Tertul. Præscrip. c. 53.

‡ Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. v. c. 20.

§ Ibid.



his contemporary Pope, St. Eleutherius \*, being the same who sent missionaries for the conversion of Lucius and his British subjects †. The passage quoted by Eusebius, and here referred to, is taken from a work of St. Irenæus still in existence ‡, in which this celebrated Greek doctor, the ornament of the second century, says many things still more energetic § in defence of tradition, of the authority of the Church and of the apostolic see, than the passage alluded to. It is possible Dr. Ledwich may not have seen this well-known work of St. Irenæus, but he must have been perfectly conscious he was shamefully misrepresenting this father's meaning in the passage which he quoted from Eusebius.

With respect to the bestowing of palls by Cardinal Paparo in the name of Pope Eugenius III. A. D. 1152, upon which Dr. Ledwich and other writers so much harp, it was not in fact, nor was it considered any subjection of the Church of Ireland to that of Rome. On the contrary, it was a dignity and an immunity from foreign

\* Τῇ αὐτῇ τάξει (τῶν ἐπὶ ῥώμης ἐπισκοπεύσαντων) καὶ τῇ αὐτῇ διδάχῃ ἣ τὴ ἀπο τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ παράδοσις, καὶ τὸ τῆς ἀληθείας κήρυγμα κατήντησεν εἰς ἡμᾶς. Ibid. c. vi.

† Bede Eccl. Hist. l. i. c. 4, &c.

‡ Contra Hæres.

§ “ Adhanc ecclesiam (Romanam) PROPTER POTIOREM  
“ PRINCIPALITATEM necesse est omnem convenire ecclesiam,”  
&c. Contra Hæres. l. iii. c. 3.



jurisdiction conferred upon it; in as much as the Archbishop of Canterbury for the time being had claimed a legatine jurisdiction over Ireland ever since the time of St. Augustine \*, by virtue of the authority “over all the Britains †,” conferred by St. Gregory upon this our apostle. Accordingly the Irish prelates, and St. Malachy in particular, had earnestly solicited the court of Rome to send certain palls to the Church of Ireland, as the proof of her immediate dependence on the See Apostolic ‡.

I come now to consider the system which is peculiar to Dr. Ledwich on the present subject. In fact it is such as never did enter, and is never

\* Bede says of St. Laurence, successor of St. Augustine of Canterbury; “Non solum novæ, quæ de Anglis erat collecta, ecclesiæ curam gerebat, sed et veterum Britannicæ incolarum, necnon et Scotorum, qui Hiberniam incolunt, populis pastorem impendere solitudinem curabat,” l. ii. c. 2. In after times Lanfranc exercised this paramount jurisdiction, and received oaths of canonical obedience from Patrick and Donatus, whom he successively consecrated to the see of Dublin. See the very explicit oaths to this effect in Wharton *Anglia Sacra*, vol. i. pp. 80, and 81. Hence when there was a question of raising the city of Waterford to the dignity of a bishopric, the Irish prelates, with their King, applied to St. Anselm of Canterbury, to effect this by his legatine jurisdiction. See Eadmer, *Hist. Novorum*, c. 36. Hence also, when the four palls were granted to the Irish metropolitans, Roger Hoveden complains: “Hoc factum est contra antiquam consuetudinem et dignitatem Cantuariensis ecclesiæ.” Hoveden ad an. 1151.

† “Britanniarum omnes episcopos tuæ fraternitati committimus.” Bed. l. i. c. 27. By *Britannia*, in the Plural, Polybius and Ptolemy understand both the sister islands.

‡ See St. Bernard in *Vita Malach.* c. 15, “Metropoliticæ sedi deerat adhuc Pallii usus quod est plenitudo honoris. Erat et altera metropolitica sedes, &c.”



likely to enter, into the conception of any other man of letters whomsoever. Having vainly attempted to give an Asiatic origin to the Christianity of Ireland, totally unconnected with, and in direct opposition to the Christianity which prevailed at Rome, in England, and other places; he endeavours to shew a continuation of this new discovered religion down to the 12th century\*, amongst an order of pious monks, called Culdees. He tells us, that their founder St. Columba† was a quartodeciman‡; that “they did not adopt the corruptions of the “Anglo-Saxon church, or the superstitions “which contaminated Christianity §;” that “they adhered to the ancient faith, and abhorred “Roman innovations ||;” that “Commian, a “Culdee, apostatized and listened to Roman “emissaries ¶;” that “at length Adamnan, the “Culdean abbot of Hy, likewise apostatized\*\*.” These are a few among the many glaring errors which this “cultivator and destroyer of anti-“quity,” as I have elsewhere called him, has fallen into in speaking of the Culdees.

In the first place then these *Colidei*, or *worshippers of God*, were not a distinct order of monks founded by St. Columba, and confined to the island of Hy; but this was a general

\* Antiq. p. 96.

† Ibid. p. 103.

‡ Ibid. p. 107.

§ P. Ibid.

|| P. 100.

¶ P. 108.

\*\* P. 111.



name for all the ancient Scotch and Irish monks, or rather canons regular, as we are assured by unquestionable authority \*.—2dly, St. Columba and his monks of Hy were not quartodecimans, if Bede, who knew them so well, may be credited in what he affirms concerning them †.—3dly, The Culdees had no other faith, or ecclesiastical discipline, except as to the mode of computing the festival of Easter, than the English church, and all the other churches of the same ages had. For does Dr. Ledwich himself believe that if they had denied the real presence of Christ in the blessed Eucharist, or the utility of praying for the dead, or that of desiring the prayers of the saints, or the Pope's supremacy, or had even rejected the use of pious pictures in their churches, or of holy water, and such like things which we are sure the English Saxons adopted, they would have been invited to join with the Roman missionaries in forming our infant church, in educating its youth, and in governing it in quality of bishops? Would their virtues have been so highly extolled

\* Giraldus calls them "Cælibes, quos Cælicolas vel Coli—  
" deos vocant." Topograph. Hib. Dist. ii. cap. 4. Hector Boetius,  
lib. vi. Hist. Scot. says, that the name became so vulgar, that priests  
in general, almost down to his own time, were called "Culdei,"  
that is to say, "Cultores Dei."

† "Quem tamen (Diem Paschæ) non semper in luna quarta-  
" decima, cum Judæis, ut quidam rebantur, sed in die quidem Do-  
" minica, alia tamen quam decebat hebdomada celebrabant."  
Eccles. Hist. l. iii. c. 4.



by Bede, and the Catholic hagiographers in general, as they are, and would the names of their saints be inscribed upon the churches, and in the martyrologies of Rome, and all the Catholics of Christendom. — 4thly, It is evident that what Dr. Ledwich writes concerning the *ancient religion* and *Roman innovations*, ought to be inverted: for nothing is more certain than that the ancient British prelates originally followed the practice of Rome and the other churches, with respect to the time of keeping Easter, as well as in other particulars, and, that the error which they and the Irish prelates fell into upon this point was an innovation comparatively of a late date. Of this we have positive proofs: for the chief bishops of the British church were present at, and subscribed to the Council of Arles, as I observed to you before, the very first canon of which appoints the time of Easter to be kept on the same day throughout the world, and that the Pope should give general notice of that day\*.

This canon was confirmed in the œcumenical council of Nice, and the Emperor Constantine

\* “Breviarium Epistolæ Domino Sanctissimo Fratri Silvestro  
 “Marinus vel Cætus Episcoporum qui adnati fuerunt in oppido  
 “Arelatensi. — Quid decrevimus communi consilio caritati tuæ  
 “significavimus ut omnes sciant quid in futurum observare debeant.—Can. i. Primo loco de observatione Paschæ dominici  
 “ut uno die et uno tempore per omnem orbem a nobis observetur  
 “et juxta consuetudinem, literas ad omnes tu dirigas.” Labbe,  
 “Concil. tom. i.



wrote a circular letter to all the churches of the christian world, informing them of what had been decreed in this particular, and exhorting the several bishops to subscribe to it\*. In this letter he testifies that our British provinces were amongst those which agreed with Rome and the remainder of the West, as also with the South, the North, and a great part of the East, in opposition to a certain part of the East, (namely, Syria and Mesopotamia) as to the time of calculating Easter†. It is evident, then, that the observance of the British churches was conformable to that of Rome in this particular, down to the year 325, when the aforesaid letter was written; and there cannot be a doubt that they continued in the same observance as long as the Pope, agreeably to the ancient custom, and the decree of the council of Arles‡, had a facility of writing to them, and giving them notice of the right day of keeping Easter; that is to say, until the Britons were crushed by the Saxons, and driven into the mountains of Wales and Cornwall. This catastrophe was complete about the year 500, at which time we may suppose that, attempting to calculate the vernal equinox, and

\* Euseb; in Vit. Constant. l. iii. c. 17.

† ὅπερ δ' ἀνὰ κατὰ τὴν τῶν Ῥωμαίων πόλιν τε καὶ Ἀφρικὴν, Ἰταλίαν τε ἅπασαν, Αἴγυπτον, Σπανίαν, Γαλλίαν, Βρεττανίαν, Λίβυαν, ὅλην ἑλλάδα, Ἀσιανὴν τε διόικησιν, Ποντικὴν τε καὶ Κιλικίαν, μὴ συμφώνῳ Φυλάττεται γνώμῃ. Euseb. Vit. Cons. l. iii. c. 12.

‡ Can. i.



the time of the moon, for themselves, instead of receiving the calculations of Rome and Alexandria\*, they fell, not into the practice of the Jews and the Quartodecimans, which consisted in keeping the Pasch on the 14th day of the moon next after the vernal equinox, whatever day of the week that happened to be, but into a peculiar error of their own, by keeping Easter on the 14th day when it fell upon a Sunday, whereas the churches on the continent, in this case, waited till the ensuing Sunday. This erroneous calculation the British prelates seem to have communicated to those of Ireland and Scotland. The error in question, tho' attended with great inconveniences†, yet not having been formally condemned by the Church, like that of the Quartodecimans, was tolerated by the Roman See and the prelates in communion with it, until the Christians of these islands becoming sensible of it, gradually relinquished it.—Now this rectifying of an acknowledged error, Dr. Ledwich repeatedly terms *apostacy*. But to what system did the British churches apostatize? Namely, to that which was common

\* St. Leo testifies that the calculation was made at Alexandria (which city was famous for astronomical studies) and being notified to the Pope, was by him promulgated throughout Christendom.

† Venerable Bede furnishes us with a striking instance of this inconvenience with respect to King Oswy, who followed the British computation, and his Queen Eanfled, who adopted that of the continent. It happened on one occasion, that the King was celebrating his Easter with Halleluiahs and flesh meat, while the Queen was beginning her Holy Week with lamentations and fasting. L. iii. c. 25.



to all Christians except themselves; to that which their fathers had followed, and subscribed to in a great council; in short, to that which Dr. Ledwich himself, with all those of his communion, adopt at the present day ! See, Sir, into what disorders and contradictions this bewildered antiquary has plunged, in order to prove that catholicity was not the ancient religion of Ireland !

I have run to this length upon a controversy, comparatively trivial, because I could not more briefly dispel the mist in which Dr. Ledwich has involved it, for the sake of misrepresenting one of the most important subjects of Irish antiquity, the *ancient religion of the island*.

I am, &c.

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## LETTER XVII.

*Cork, July 27, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

MY road from Cashel to this city led me through Cahir, Balliporeen, and Fermoy. The last mentioned town is a new



creation, having started up, all at once, at the command of its proprietor, Mr. Anderson. It is pleasantly situated on the banks of the Blackwater River, over which a firm and elegant stone bridge is thrown. The town itself being uniformly built of neat houses of stone, overcast with a white composition, and the streets standing in parallel and perpendicular lines, being also well paved, and kept exceedingly clean, few, if any towns of the same size in England, can be compared with it in exterior beauty. With respect, however, to the face of the country in general, speaking of it as far as I have yet seen it, I cannot agree with a late able writer, that Ireland is, “the fairest island in the world\*,” especially while her elder sister stands by her side. This I am sure of, that I have not yet seen in Ireland such a garden as the Vale of Evesham, such hills and dales as those of Derbyshire and South Wales, nor such forest scenery as that of Windsor or the New Forest. True it is, this country appears to a disadvantage in consequence of its relative poverty and unsettled state, which cannot but have proved unfavourable to the planting of hedges, trees, and woods; as also to the building of neat villages, elegant churches, and comfortable farm-houses, with the other numerous ornaments and conveniencies to be met with in every well inhabited part of England. I

\* See Parnell's Historical Apology for the Irish Catholics, p. 107.



may add that, as far as I am able to judge, the soil and climate of this island, though perhaps better adapted to pasturage, are not so favourable to the growth of large timber trees and wheat corn, nor to the ripening of fruit, as those under the same parallels of latitude in our own.

As I approached, however, to this city of Cork, I found the country surprisingly improve in all these respects, till reaching the Vale of Glanmire, by what is called the lower road, I was quite enchanted with the beauties, natural and artificial, of the scenery which opened to my view; particularly with the grand expanse of water in the center of it, skirted as it is on each side with verdant meadows, and enclosed by lofty hills, whose groves, at the tops of them, seem to reach the clouds. That view, however, was but a foretaste of the delight which I experienced when I beheld this sheet of water disemboguing itself into the grand estuary of Cork. As my eye wandered up and down the delightful scene, surveying by turns the majestic tide, covered with ships and boats, moving in various directions; the aspiring hills and rocks, crowned with elegant villas and plantations; and the magnificent city itself, with the back ground of vast mountains, I concluded in my mind, that neither the Severn at Chepstow, nor the sea at Southampton, were to be compared with it.

The renowned emporium of Cork owes its foundation to St. Finbar, its first bishop, and his disciple St. Nesson, who about the end of the



sixth century established a school there, which soon became exceedingly celebrated and numerous. By this means a hollow marsh, as the name Cork implies\*, soon grew up to be a bishop's see and a flourishing city. It is still remarkable for the numerous well regulated schools it contains for instructing the youth of both sexes, especially the poor, in the several branches of literature proper for them, but chiefly in the religious doctrine and morality originally taught here by St. Finbar. Indeed, no pains are spared for this purpose by the bishops and priests in every part of Ireland which I have visited; and I confidently assert that a more glaring and calumnious falsehood never was published against any set of men, than that which is constantly propagated in England against the Irish Catholic Clergy, that they keep the lower order of the people uninstructed, in order to attach it more firmly to themselves and their religion, under an idea that ignorance is the mother of devotion.

This very morning, Sir, I have visited a catholic school, formed upon Mr. Lancaster's plan, for the education of poor boys; and I could not but admire the method by which two hundred children are taught to read, write, and cast accounts, besides their christian duty, under one master, and in less time than a tenth part of their number could acquire equal learning by the ordi-

\* Corcach,



nary method. A larger school is now preparing for this establishment, when the 200 boys will be augmented to 600. There are other schools in the city, at which from 600 to 700 poor catholic boys are educated, by means of a subscription amongst the bishop, clergy, gentry, and opulent tradesmen of their religion. In other parts of Ireland, where there are few or no Catholics of these descriptions, I found that the poor-schools were supported by the pence and half-pence collected for this purpose every week by the parish priest.

For the education of poor girls there are two houses in different parts of the city, of the institute founded by my respectable friend, called the Presentation, in each of which there are seven or eight mistresses, who educate gratis as many hundreds of poor children in constant succession : for the nature of the institute requires that its members should receive no gratuity whatsoever for their trouble, but should devote themselves during life to the instruction of poor children, from pure motives of charity and religion \*. There are already five other houses of this new institute ; one at Kilkenny, another at Killarney, a third at Waterford, and two others

\* How well these ladies succeed in their patriotic as well as pious undertaking, the public has heard from Sir John Carr, who asserts that " the children educated at the Convent of the Presentation at Killarney are universally sought after as servants, by Protestants as well as by Catholics, on account of their irreproachable conduct." *Stranger in Ireland*, p. 384.



in Dublin. Besides these, there are other establishments for the education of poor girls at Tullow, Thurles, Drogheda, and in most parts of Ireland; different in certain respects from the above-mentioned institute, but all having the same meritorious object in view, the gratuitous instruction of poor female children. The members of some of the latest institutes engage in them for a twelvemonth, others for their lives. I found also, in different towns and cities, small communities of single men, of a pious and charitable disposition, who have devoted themselves, but without any permanent engagement, to religious exercises and the education of poor boys, many hundreds of whom they have constantly in a course of religious, moral, and useful instruction. Some of these good men are possessed of considerable property, which they devote to the same laudable object as they do their persons. I have met with other classes of these associated schoolmasters, who, being otherwise unprovided with the means of supporting themselves, are accustomed to make shoes, or exercise some other handicraft in extra hours, in order to gain just so much as is necessary for their maintenance, while their principal employment is the charitable instruction of poor boys.

I say nothing of the Catholic Orphan and Asylum Houses at Cork and in Dublin, nor of the private schools for the education of the youth of both sexes; but I must not omit to inform you, that in the former of these cities, besides



the two communities of the Presentation, mentioned above, there is also a convent, as it is called, of the Ursuline ladies, an institute which has been long celebrated all over the continent for its method and success in giving a moral, religious, and genteel education to young females of the higher class. The ladies of Cork have at present about sixty children of that description under their care, whom they instruct in the ornamental as well as the religious branches of education. To accomplish the principal objects they have in view, they conceive it to be as essentially necessary to keep their scholars from the knowledge of some things, as it is to communicate to them information concerning others. In two points they are, with just reason, inexorably rigid; they never permit a novel to enter within their walls, and they never suffer a scholar to go out of them, in order to be present at a theatrical representation. In fact, of what use would their lessons of filial duty, domestic retiredness, the dread of sin, and the love of God, be to the mind of a pupil who should behold all such virtues held up to contempt in those ensnaring publications of the circulating libraries, and those still more fascinating amusements of the stage? In fact, when does the grave parent appear upon the stage, but in quality of a jealous and avaricious tyrant, who is the enemy of his offspring's happiness? For what end is the serious moralist or Christian introduced there, except to detect him in vice, and expose him as a hypocrite? On the



other hand, is there a character of either sex, brought forward to engage the admiration and affection of the spectators, who is not a model of the fashionable vices of the age, (being precisely those which young people ought to be chiefly armed against) its dissipation, its prodigality, and its irreligion? In vain, Sir, will you attempt to correct the deleterious effects of this subtle poison, by mingling some moral lessons in the cup of vice. The virtues you recommend to us are those which, in this age and country, we are not strongly tempted to violate. On the other hand, the vices which you hold out to our hatred, are such as we before-hand held in abhorrence. In spite of what dramatists and rhyming moralists say, my experience tells me, that the real reformation of my disorderly passions is a work of seriousness and pain, not of amusement and pleasure. In vain do you remind me, that the stage has of late years been chastened, and that the indecencies, which sullied the drama fifty or sixty years ago, are now banished from it. Supposing this were true to the extent you wish me to understand; supposing there were nothing in the plot, nothing in the words, nothing in the dresses, nothing in the dances, nothing in the company, either within the doors or without the doors of the theatres, to excite one particular passion, the most difficult of all others to curb and repress, (but, alas! how far are these suppositions from the truth in each of the instances!) yet, remember, Sir, there are other passions con-



genial to the human breast, which it is equally our duty to fight against, as against the one alluded to\*. In a word, Sir, the morality of the theatre is directly the reverse of the morality of the gospel, and in many respects, even of the natural law ; and I hereby warn you, Sir, never to complain to me of your children, should they turn out undutiful, or otherwise immoral, if you permit them to frequent the playhouse, or even the circulating library.

In concluding this letter, I must not forget to mention, that the ladies of the institute of St. Ursula, at Cork, besides their school for the education of genteel children, take part in the meritorious work of their sisters of the Presentation, by keeping open a poor-school in a different part of their house, where eighty poor catholic girls are instructed by mistresses appointed for this purpose. The present superior of this establishment is sister to my friend the Catholic Bishop of Cork, whose name is held in so much respect by persons of all denominations in both islands.

I am, &c.

\* There is one vice, in particular, more frequently and severely condemned in scripture than any other, and declared even to be the *beginning of all evil*, which in the system of dramatic morality, and even in common discourse, has been transferred into the catalogue of virtues, namely, pride. Christians now-a-days are not only proud, but they are constantly professing their pride, and boasting of it ! It is unnecessary to shew in what manner the ethics of the stage are directly calculated to excite and augment this immoderate opinion and love of our own worth and qualities.



## LETTER XVIII.

*Cork, July 28, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

IT would require a volume to dwell upon the different modes in which the catholic clergy of Ireland exert themselves to procure, not only a moral and religious, but also a practically useful education, for the poor children of their respective parishes. This is the fact with respect to the villages and hamlets no less than the towns and cities. I can speak to this point from my own observation and experience: for when, in travelling through the country, my chaise has stopped at a village, I have generally made it my business to enquire for the school, which I have often found to be the same building with the chapel, and I have always found it well filled with children, who were learning to read, write, and cast accounts, besides their catechism. In like manner, when the driver of the chaise, in creeping up a mountain or hill, has descended from his seat in order to



relieve his horses, I have seldom failed to descend from mine, in order to intrude myself into some or other of the smoky cabins of the poor on the road side, for the purpose of examining the children, who swarm in them, upon the chief points of their catechism. Now I aver that, upon the desert mountains as well as in the thronged villages, I have found the children in general far better instructed in their religious and moral duties, than I have found poor children of the same age (for I have heretofore made it my business to examine them also) in the country places of England \*. This assertion, which intimates that the lower order of Irish are, upon the whole, more instructed than the same class in England, I know, will surprise you. But to convince you that I am not singular in my ideas†, and by way of taking a more comprehensive view of the subject, I shall state to you a fact which I

\* The present Bishop of London complains, that he “found vast numbers of his diocesans in a state little short of pagan ignorance and irreligion.” What wonder that a great proportion of the members of the established church should be as indifferent to its doctrine as to its rites, when we are assured from good authority, that “out of a population of 64,000 inhabitants, 52,000” are of the latter description. Archdeacon Woodhouse’s Charge, A. D. 1800.

† The intelligent author of a late pamphlet, called “The Address of a Christian Philosopher to the Hibernian Society in London for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge in Ireland,” very forcibly maintains and proves, *that the bulk of the vulgar Irish are better instructed in the Christian doctrine than the bulk of the vulgar English*, p: 5.



have lately learned from a military officer of equal honour and discernment. He said that, having raised a company of soldiers, composed of nearly the same number of Englishmen and Irishmen, he found so many more of the latter had learned to read and write than of the former, that he was obliged to choose most of his serjeants from amongst them. As you are seldom without a regiment or a battalion at least of regulars in your neighbourhood, in which, of course, you will find a third of the soldiers Irish, I invite you to make the experiment upon it with respect to the comparative number of Englishmen and Irishmen who have learnt to read and write, which my friend was obliged to make upon his company; and I request you will communicate to me the result of your enquiry.

If what is stated should be well-grounded, how much is the English public imposed upon by the incessant and loud complaints with which it is stunned on the subject of the alledged brutal ignorance of the Irish poor, and their total want of education, as if they were a race of savages, unacquainted with the use of letters, and utterly destitute of christian and moral instruction! If this were true, the fault would not rest with them, but with their government, which, till of late years, prohibited their having masters of their own religion. But it is not true; for as to the use of letters, I really believe, conformably to



the statement of my friend the officer, that a greater comparative number of them are acquainted with it, than of the poor cottagers in our own country; and with respect to christian and moral information, I know and am sure that the former are learned compared with the latter. If, Sir, you hesitate to admit this assertion, I request you will, in the first place, after reading over the Church Catechism in *The Common Prayer Book*, and *The General Catechism for the Catholics of Ireland*\*, impartially tell me, without any reference to controverted points which of the two compositions you think best calculated to furnish a comprehensive idea of the doctrines of Christianity, and the general duties of morality. In the second place, I beg you will inform yourself of any man, whatever his description may be, who has visited both islands, whether the Catholic Clergy on my side of the water, or the Protestant Clergy on your side of it, are most assiduous in visiting and instructing their poor parishioners, and particularly in teaching the children their Catechism†.

\* Printed and sold by Fitzpatrick, No. 4, Capel-street, Dublin,

† The author of the above quoted Address to the Hibernian Society, paints a striking, but true picture of the professional labours and merits of the Catholic Clergy of Ireland in the following passage: "If, Gentlemen, you are not under the influence of very gross prejudice, you will, in receiving representations of the necessitous state of Ireland, maturely weigh the allegations of men who have stigma-



Yet, such is the infection of a general report, that those who are liberal on other subjects are found to be bigotted on this. Thus the late tourist writes as follows: "The instruction of the common people (in Ireland) is in the lowest state of degradation. In the summer a wretched uncharactered itinerant derives a scanty existence by opening a school in some ditch covered with heath and furze. What proportion of morals and learning can flow

tized, and still stigmatize as the last of mankind, some of the most deserving and useful men in the community. Yes, Gentlemen, take an impartial view of them, and you must allow that I do not say too much. There are among them preachers and teachers of the first excellence: there are men of profound erudition, men of nice classical taste, and men of the best critical acumen. They are not formed, it is true, to shine in the drawing-room or at the tea-table; nor are such qualifications very desirable in churchmen; for you well know, that the refined manners of fashionable life are often as incompatible with christian morality, as the grosser vices of the vulgar herd. Their manners are, in general, decent; but their exertions are great, their zeal is indefatigable. See them, in the most inclement seasons, at the most unseasonable hours, in the most uncultivated parts, amidst the poorest and most wretched of mankind! They are always ready at a call; nothing can deter them; the sense of duty surmounts every obstacle! And there is no reward for them in this world! The good effects of their zeal are visible to every impartial and discerning mind; notwithstanding the many great disadvantages under which it labours. For instance, you may often find a parish so extensive and populous as to require two or three clergymen properly to serve it; and yet the poverty of the parish is such as to be scarce able to maintain one in a tolerably decent manner. - I could point out many other disadvantages, but I forbear at present, &c.—After all, the good effects are so conspicuous, that I repeat it again: the lower orders of Irishmen are better instructed in the doctrines of Christianity, than the lower orders of Englishmen." P. 27.



“ from such a source can easily be imagined. A  
 “ gentleman stated, before the Dublin Associa-  
 “ tion for distributing bibles, that whole parishes  
 “ were without a Bible \*.” Elsewhere he says :  
 ‘ Education never beamed upon the poor Irish-  
 ‘ man ; sentiments of honour were never instilled  
 “ into him.”—But, without stopping to controvert  
 the general statement of the fact itself, which is  
 far from being accurate, I could wish to ask this  
 writer, why an itinerant master, especially  
 amongst a people of simple and uncorrupt man-  
 ners, may not instil good morals and literature  
 into his scholars as well as a high pensioned  
 pedagogue of London or Westminster? The late  
 classical and illustrious Edmund Burke acknow-  
 ledged to his friend, my Right Rev. Fellow-  
 traveller and present host, that he learnt more  
 Latin and Greek from an obscure schoolmaster  
 on the banks of the Nore, than he afterwards  
 acquired at the more celebrated places of educa-  
 tion, and at the university itself. With respect  
 to social, civil, and generous principles, such as  
 come under the description of sentiments, in  
 case the tourist thinks these are acquired from  
 schoolmasters, he must admit that the itinerants,  
 whom he describes, are capable of communicating  
 them, since he unequivocally attributes them to  
 the Irish poor who receive their instruction from  
 them. By the same argument he must admit

\* Sir John Carr's *Stranger in Ireland*, p. 251.



that he can teach classical learning, since he tells us of a poor horse boy, in the county of Kerry, who was found by the gentleman, his employer, to be well versed in the classical historians, orators, and poets \*; adding, that classical learning was very general amongst the peasants in that remote part of Ireland a few years ago. That this is an undoubted fact, and that a great proportion of these peasants, some twenty or thirty years back, could even converse very fluently in Latin, I can testify in some degree from my own acquaintance with some of them, and still more from the account of witnesses of the highest honour, and of first rate information. Indeed the fact has already been asserted in the face of the British public by the enlightened O'Leary, who speaks of "barefooted boys studying the classics in the mountains of Ireland, and of the civility of the common people there to strangers, and to one another, as circumstances unparalleled with respect to the common people of other nations †."

But, says our author, who, upon this point, speaks the opinion of Protestants in general, the Irish Catholics must be grossly ignorant of religion and morality, since "there are whole parishes in Ireland without the use of a Bible." It is to supply this deficiency that an association of voluntary subscribers has lately been esta-

\* Sir John Carr's *Stranger in Ireland*, p. 180.

† See the Rev. Arthur O'Leary's *Address to the Lords Spiritual and Temporal*, with an account of Sir Henry Mildmay's bill, p. 16.



blished in London.—Is then the perusal of the Bible, Sir, the only means by which mankind can attain to a knowledge of the revealed truths of religion? Was it intended to be such by the divine author of Christianity, when he sent his apostles *to teach all nations, even to the end of the world\**, without saying a single word to them about writing the gospels or epistles. In fact, our Saviour knew that 99 out of a 100 of those individuals of all nations, whom he sent his apostles to convert, would neither be able to procure any written books of revelation, nor even to read them, if they could procure them. Were the Patriarchal families, and other servants of God, in a state of ignorance, concerning either the positive injunctions of the Almighty with respect to the Sabbath-day, the rites of sacrifice, or their moral duties, during the space of near 2500 years, that is to say, from the days of Adam down to those of Moses, in consequence of no part of the Old Testament having been written? And were the Christian Churches established by the apostles throughout Asia, Europe, and Africa, ignorant of the law of Christ, because no part of the New Testament was then committed to writing? Indeed during more than four hundred years after the christian æra, that is to say, during the golden ages of the Church, the Canon of the scripture, as it is generally received by Protestants, remained unsettled. In fact, the di-

\* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.



vine law, like the law of the land, is partly written and partly unwritten\*. And as it is possible that we might have known and enjoyed the British laws and constitution, though our ancestors had been unacquainted with the use of letters, so it is possible that all the essential doctrines and institutions of Christianity might have been transmitted to us (as several of them, by the confession of Protestants themselves, actually are †) though the different books of the New Scripture had not been composed. Such is the uniform doctrine of the enlightened fathers of the Church in the primitive ages, that is to say, of an Augustine, a Vincent of Lerins, a Tertullian, and an Irenæus. As I am not writing a treatise of controversy, but barely refuting a popular error, I shall satisfy myself with quoting in the margin of this letter a passage from the last mentioned Doctor of the Greek and Gallican churches, who, as we have seen above, had been instructed in his faith by an illustrious disciple of St. John the Evangelist, I mean St. Polycarp‡. You will see that he expressly admits

\* “Lex Scripta” and “Lex non Scripta,” Blackstone’s Commentaries, vol. i. sect. 3.

† Such as the observance of Sunday instead of the Sabbath, infant baptism, and the very inspiration of the four gospels and canonical epistles, &c.

‡ “Tantæ igitur ostensionis cum sint hæc, non oportet adhuc  
“querere apud alios veritatem, quam facile est ab ecclesiâ sumere,  
“cum apostoli, quasi in depositarium dives, plenissimè in eam  
“contulerint omnia quæ sunt veritatis, ut omnis qui velit, sumat  
“ex ea potum vitæ.—Quid autem si neque apostoli quidem scrip-



the possibility of retaining the revealed word of God without written documents, and that he asserts the fact of several whole nations in his time possessing this divine word, as far as was necessary for them, without ink or paper, by the help of tradition and the Spirit of God.

And what, after all, is the word of God? "It does not," says a holy father, "consist in the letter of it, but the sense." For *the letter*, we are assured, *killeth, but the spirit giveth life* \*. If in reading the scriptures we fall into essential errors with respect to its meaning, it becomes to us a dark lanthorn, or what is worse, an *ignis fatuus*, instead of a beneficial light. Thus you, Sir, whom I know to be a strict member of the Church of England, think that the Dissenters would be more enlightened than they are, if they did not read the bible at all, whilst they quote one passage of it against episcopacy, another against the established liturgy, and a third against the doctrine of man's freedom of choice; and both your church and the congregation of the Dissenters wish to take the bible out of the hands of the Quakers, when they interpret it to forbid baptism and the eucharist, the defending

"turas reliquissent nobis; nonne oportebat ordinem sequi traditionis, quam tradiderunt iis quibus committebant ecclesias? Cui ordinationi assentiunt multæ gentes Barbarorum, qui in Christo credunt, sine charta vel atramento, scriptam habentes per spiritum in cordibus suis salutem, et veterem traditionem diligenter custodientes." St. Iren. contra Hæres. iii. c. 4.

\* 2 Cor. iii. 6.



ourselves from the attacks of our enemies, the payment of tithes, and the shewing due respect to magistrates and the sovereign. Hence, Sir, you see that the mere distributing of bibles is not a sure way to diffuse the light of the gospel amongst the people, unless you furnish them, at the same time, with some accredited interpreter of its meaning, which the very dissensions amongst honest and well-meaning people, who profess to make it their only guide, prove to be often obscure, or rather unintelligible, unless you point out to them a living speaking tribunal, which is at all times open and ready to explain their difficulties, and to decide upon their controversies. The good sense of human legislators has in every state which has been founded since the beginning of the world, provided such living speaking tribunals for the interpretation of their laws; and, as the great Fenelon observes, it would be evidently better to have no code of laws at all, than such a one as should authorize every man to interpret it for himself\*.

\* Whereas infinite mischief arises to mankind from their ignorance and wilful violation of the laws of the state, and whereas the support of judges and tribunals to interpret these laws is attended with an enormous expense to the public, and with other great inconveniences, it would be well worthy the charity and patriotism of the Bible Societies to subscribe for a cheap edition of all the statutes of the realm, and to distribute these amongst the poor, or at least to lodge one copy of them in every village in the united kingdom, that every subject might decide for himself in whatever concerns his person or property !—You start at this proposal! But



What then are the sentiments and ordinances of the Catholic Church in this respect? She earnestly wishes, in the first place, that the truths and the maxims of God's word may be deeply impressed upon the minds of all her children, and she requires of all her pastors, from the highest to the lowest, as the most important of all their duties, to be unremittingly assiduous in inculcating this word to the young and ignorant. To qualify themselves for fulfilling this obligation, she enjoins all her said pastors constantly to read and study the holy scriptures, which indeed she has the merit of having preserved inviolate during the many centuries which have elapsed since their delivery. With respect to the laity, she never interdicted the bible to them, as Protestants suppose; but, at a time when coblers and tailors were insulting heaven with their blasphemies, and convulsing the earth with their seditions\*, all grounded upon the misinterpretation of the bible, she enjoined that those who took this mysterious book in hand, should have received such a tincture of learning as to be able to read it in one or other of the learned languages, unless their particular pastor judged, from their good sense and good dispositions, that they would derive no mischief from reading it in the vulgar tongue†.

pray, Sir, are not the common people better qualified to judge for themselves of human laws, regarding the things of this world, than of divine revelations concerning the mysterious nature of God, his invisible grace, and his spiritual kingdom?

\* Muncer, Knipperdolling, and the other first Anabaptists.

† Reg. iv. Ind. Trid.



At present, however, the catholic prelates do not think it necessary to enforce even this restriction, and accordingly you may find in the shops of all the principal booksellers in Ireland, bibles in folio, in quarto, and in octavo, which are indiscriminately offered to sale with the entire approbation of those prelates.

One restriction, however, necessarily remains upon all Catholics who read the scriptures, that is, to say, upon the clergy, the bishops and the Pope himself, no less than upon the laity, which is not to interpret it in any other sense than the Universal Church has always understood it. Hence these sayings of the fathers : *Nil nisi quod traditum est* \*. *Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus* †, are fundamental maxims in our communion. In fact, this is saying that we acknowledge a still subsisting tribunal in our Church for deciding on contested points in the divine law ; as there ever must be human tribunals to interpret doubtful points in the laws of men. But do not fancy that this restriction was imposed by our Church from a consciousness that the plain obvious text of scripture is contrary to her tenets and favourable to yours ! It has always subsisted, it is of divine origin. You know, Sir, which are the chief points of controversy between your Church and ours. Now do

\* Pope Stephen writing to St. Cyprian. Inter Opera. St. Cyprian.

† Vincentius Lerin in Commonit.



you think that a simple upright man reading the institution of the blessed sacrament in the gospel, *Take, eat, this is my body; Drink, this is my blood* \*, and the promise of it: *My flesh is meat indeed, my blood is drink indeed* †, would be led to believe that it was a mere ceremony of eating bread and drinking wine in remembrance of him, which Christ was instituting and promising! Again, when the same unprejudiced reader should meet with this striking declaration of Christ to his head apostle, whilst he bestowed upon him the name of PETER, or ROCK, *Thou art PETER, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, &c.* ‡ would be led to fancy that Christ here constituted every civil prince, pagan as well as christian; a head of his Church, and not the successor of St. Peter? Lastly, have the catholic pastors any reason to fear that such a reader will be induced to dispute their authority in spiritual concerns from perusing such texts as the following: *Tell the Church, and if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as a heathen or a publican* §. *Obey your prelates* ||,

\* Matt. xxvi. 26, 27. Mark xiv. 22. Luke xxii. 19.

† John vi. 55.

‡ Matt. xvi. 18.

§ Matt. xviii. 17.

|| Πείθεσθε τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν.



*and be subject to them: for they watch as being to render an account to God of your souls* \*.

With this restriction, dictated by common sense no less than by religion, (for would it not be foolish in a private individual to suppose that he understands the scriptures better than all the fathers and doctors of the Church put together, and that God has abandoned the whole Church to error and preserved him from it?) I would not at the present day, withhold the divine text itself, even in the vulgar tongue, from any one who was desirous of reading it, though I know very well that he may acquire the sense of it, in all necessary points, much more speedily and securely from his catechism, and the instructions of his pastor; because there is an unction and energy in this text which no other language can equal. But, if I found a second Voltaire extracting mental poison from Solomon's Song; or another Cromwell, reading to a ruthless soldiery God's ordinances concerning the smiting of the Amorites and Canaanites†, to induce them to kill every Catholic, man, woman, and child in Ireland; or a Venner, maintaining from the Revelations, that no king is to be obeyed but King Jesus; or finally, were I to hear those dangerous comments of our modern Moravian and Antinomian Methodists on St. Paul's Epistles‡, importing that they, being made free by

\* Heb. xiii. 17.

† Deut. vii. 2.

‡ To the Romans and the Galatians.



Christ, are not subject to any law either of God or man, I-would, if it were in my power, withdraw the bible from every such profaner of it, and, instead of it, I would put into his hands the excellent General Catechism for the Catholics of Ireland, mentioned above, in which he would find the bread of God's word broken, and prepared for his weak digestion by those prelates to whom this duty particularly belongs.

In a word, the object of the associators and other persons who distribute bibles amongst the Irish peasantry, with instructions to hammer out of them a religion for themselves, is not to enlighten but to obscure their minds, is not to communicate religious knowledge, but to deprive them of that which they have, to unsettle their belief, and cause them, like themselves, to be *tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine* \*.

I remain, &c.

\* Ephes. iv. 14.



## LETTER XIX.

*Cork, July 31, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

SINCE I wrote to you last, I have had different opportunities, in the visits I have paid to the gentry who possess villas upon the estuary of Cork, to survey, in detail, the several beauties of it. I am just now returned from the most delightful sailing party upon it which I ever enjoyed in my life, not excepting those in Torbay and on the coasts of Dorsetshire and Hampshire. The day could not be finer, nor the wind better regulated, so as to give spirit to the sailing, without the smallest degree of danger, nor the company more agreeable. Our vessel was a part of a flotilla of about twenty sail, in one of which there was a band of music. But what chiefly enchanted me were the views upon the water, and the surrounding landscape still varying, and becoming more and more interesting the further we sailed, namely, the harbour, where part of the royal fleet is constantly stationed, the elegant town of Cove rising from the water in the form of an amphitheatre, the numerous bays, rocks, mountains, and islands, with interspersed country seats, pavilions, villages, fortifications, and batteries,



down to the very opening of the great sea. Immense sums have been thrown away upon some of these fortifications and batteries, which are evidently calculated to repel those enemies alone who may happen to descend from the clouds; and it will be well if a great part of the million or fifteen hundred thousand pounds which are said to be still required for erecting certain new fortifications, with all the necessaries and conveniencies belonging to them, are not equally thrown away. For, by what I can learn, Ireland is of all other parts of the British empire, peculiarly the country of jobs, which may be accounted for upon political as well as moral principles.

The city of Cork is computed to contain about 100,000 inhabitants, two-thirds of whom are Catholics; the remaining third consists of members of the established church, Dissenters, Quakers, and Methodists. The last mentioned are increasing prodigiously in Ireland as well as in England; but it is all at the expense of protestantism; for they never gain a proselyte among the Catholics. Yet, however populous the cities and towns are in this island, it is in the country cabins that the strength of its numbers is to be found. These cabins line the road side in every county I have yet visited, as well along the cross and bye roads, as the turnpike roads, in a manner that, even after travelling through Lancashire and Staffordshire, you will hardly conceive; and all of them swarm, as I have before expressed my-



self, with handsome, healthy children. I need not add that the cottagers are, in a manner, exclusively Catholic, in three out of the four provinces of Ireland, and that in the fourth the Catholics are more numerous than all the other denominations of believers and unbelievers put together. In some country parishes in which I stopped I found that there were not more than three or four protestant families, whose servants, at the same time, were Catholics; in others, that only the minister and his clerk were Protestants, the latter of whom was only an occasional conformist.

In ascertaining that the catholic population of Ireland is exceedingly great, I had but to consult my own eye sight; but I never should have been able to form any thing like a correct idea of its absolute number, or of the proportion which it bears to the rest of the inhabitants, without the information which I have derived from the calculations of industrious and intelligent writers on this subject, who had better means of information than I possessed. The Royal Irish Academy published the plan of a statical inquiry concerning Ireland, one part of which was directed to the enumeration of its inhabitants, as distinguished into Catholics and Protestants; and Edward Hay, Esq. a member of the academy, took great pains in executing that plan\*, with the concurrence and approba-

\* Appendix to Hay's History of the Insurrection in Wexford.



tion of Lord Fitzwilliam, Edmund Burke, Esq. and other distinguished personages in his native county of Wexford. The Rev. Mr. Whitlaw has since prosecuted the undertaking; but it was reserved for Major Newenham to furnish the legislature and the public with a treatise which is deservedly considered as the standard work on the population of Ireland \*. It is a satisfaction, however, to observe that the different enumerators do not materially differ in their returns, and that they all give the lie direct to Dr. Duigenan †, who fears he shall not be thought sincere by the church which so amply pays him, if he were to omit any opportunity of insulting and injuring that from which he has deserted. A few days ago I had the gratification of dining and spending an evening with the above-mentioned enlightened and accurate author, who still further convinced me by word of mouth, of the correctness of the statements which he has demonstrated in print, namely, that the Catholics of Ireland, to speak in round numbers, are considerably more than four millions, whilst the inhabitants of every other denomination do not

\* A Statical and Historical Inquiry into the Progress and Magnitude of the Population of Ireland, by Thomas Newenham Esq. London, 1805. This gentleman had before published *Essays on the Population of Ireland, and the character of the Irish*, by a member of the last Irish Parliament, London, 1803.

† He maintains that "the whole inhabitants of Ireland do not exceed three millions, and that one million two hundred thousand of these are Protestants." Speech of Dr. Duigenan, May 13, 1805.



greatly exceed one million.—You will be pleased to observe, Sir, that a great deal of importance, in a political as well as moral point of view, begins now to be attached to the question concerning the relative numbers of the Protestants and Catholics of Ireland, for a reason which I may be allowed to quote from the illustrious Edmund Burke, and which he assigned almost ten years ago: “I am sure,” says this best friend of his king and country, “that every one must be sensible of the truth of Lord Fitzwilliam’s assertion, on seeing Mr. Hay’s plan: that the depression of the Catholics is not the persecution of a sect, but tyranny over a people \*.”

That the catholic population should be so great as it is, and that it should have gone on increasing under so much depression, poverty, and persecution as it has endured for two centuries and a half, is really astonishing. The history of the human race furnishes but one parallel to it, the increase of the Israelites in Egypt. This surprise will be the greater, if we take into consideration the two following circumstances: in the first place, the vast and incessant drains upon the young men of Ireland, occasioned by the army and navy, particularly of late years. How great these are and have been may be thus estimated. It is admitted that two-thirds of the present disposable forces of his Majesty are Irish, and that

\* Copy of a Letter from Edmund Burke, Esq. to Dr. Hussey, June 9, 1798, in Appendix to Hay’s History of the Insurrection.



120,000 Catholics of this country lost their lives in fighting for him during the last war alone\*. The second circumstance here alluded to, is the constant and prodigious efflux of poor Catholics from their own country, who formerly poured into the continent of Europe, and latterly into America, the West Indies, and England. I have reason to think that of the catholic congregations of London, Manchester, and Liverpool, the only large congregations in England, two-thirds are Irish, or the descendants of Irish.

If you wish to know the causes of the great population of this island, you will find them to be such as do honour to its poor inhabitants: their chastity and their abstemiousness. It is agreed amongst political and moral writers, that monogamy, or the marriage of one man with one woman, and that indissolubly contracted, as the laws of the Catholic Church require, is the great source of population; and that libertinism, polygamy, and divorce, are highly injurious to it. Now it has been stated, that the poor Irish, both men and women, are remarkable for their chastity. They marry young, and their religion takes away one of the chief incentives to infidelity, by teaching them, that even this infidelity in either party, would not justify a second

\* Statical and Historical Inquiry, p. 133.—With these facts before our eyes, how ridiculous must the vapouring of Dr. Duigenan appear, who pretends that the Protestants do not stand in need of the aid of Catholics to fight the battles of the country! See his Speech above quoted.



marriage whilst the other is living. On the other hand, the poor cottager is not afraid of being able to support himself and his family, whilst he and they are content to live upon potatoes and milk. It is true, he must pay a high rent for the garden in which he is to grow these potatoes, not less than five pounds per acre, and an exorbitant tax to the tythe proctor, which I have seen estimated, when every thing is considered, at one fifth of the whole value of the crop \*. Still he hopes to meet these expenses by the daily shillings which he is to earn by his labour, and the sale of a pig, which he will feed with the parings of his potatoes. And yet there are writers now-a-days (they must be actuated by pure malice against the Irish, and a wish to starve them) who advise the landlord to deprive the poor of the food which they have, potatoes, and to oblige them to use the food which they have not, and cannot get, wheaten bread†. For my part, I consider our illustrious countryman, who introduced this nutritive root into Ireland, as the best friend and benefac-

\* Besides the amount of the tithes, as valued by themselves, the proctors (illegally) charge two shillings in the pound for valuing them. In some parts of Ireland, as Mr. Grattan stated in the Irish Parliament, the proctor or the farmer exacts two distinct sums for every child whom he finds in a cottage; one for christening the child, another for purifying the mother, though no such ceremonies were performed by any minister, and though, in most cases, there was no minister to perform them, had they been required.

† This measure has been repeatedly and strongly recommended and insisted upon by some writer, who is much extolled for his sagacity and local knowledge, in Cobbet's Political Register.



tor that ever landed upon its shore since the arrival of St. Patrick ; and I sincerely wish that the mischief-making statue of the hero of Glencoe and pacificator of Limerick, were exchanged for the figure of that universal genius and glory of his country, Sir Walter Rawleigh. His books might be placed in the back ground, and his sword and truncheon under his feet\* ; but his left hand should grasp a bunch of the Virginian leaves, and his right should present the true Hesperian apple, the subsistence of millions of the human race, and the renewing strength of the British trident.

Far different is the situation of many Irish Catholics in the cities and principal towns, from that of the cottages in the country of whom I have been speaking. Industrious, intelligent, honest, and frugal, they have acquired by commerce or trade, not only the conveniencies of life, but also the means of purchasing considerable portions of the inheritance of their forefathers, which the luxury of the present nobility and gentry has obliged the latter to sell. It is said that more than two thirds of the real property which has been sold of late years in Ireland, has been bought by Catholics, and a well-informed writer asserts, that within the last twelvemonth alone they have purchased

\* It is true, the wars in which Sir Walter Rawleigh was engaged in Ireland, the Low Countries, and South America, were unjust and cruel ; but that was the fault of his mistress, Elizabeth, who was a tyrant in her own states, and a pirate to foreign kingdoms.



lands to the amount of above 800,000*l.* \* From what I myself can observe, it is clear to me that upon the whole there is now a vast deal more wealth amongst the Irish than amongst the English Catholics; notwithstanding so many of the latter are persons of noble families, and of great landed property.

The increasing wealth of the Irish Catholics, accompanied with the elective franchise which they enjoy, cannot fail of giving them great weight in the legislative assembly. It is true, they cannot be members of parliament themselves, but they can place several of their friends in it. At the late election for the county of Tipperary, out of 6500 freeholders who gave their votes, 4800 were Catholics. Accordingly both the county members were returned upon their interest. On the same occasion, Sir John Newport, the deservedly popular member for the city of Waterford, was returned, chiefly by means of their votes, in opposition to government, the corporation, the established clergy, the army and the navy, all of whom exerted themselves in favour of another gentleman.

In a word, superior as the Catholics of Ireland are to the Orange faction which opposes them, in numbers, abilities, and integrity, with daily increasing wealth and political influence, befriended, as they also are, by the talents and the ex-

\* See Two More Letters from Peter Plymley, so called, to his Brother Abraham.



ertions of the first men and ablest writers in the empire, it is not in the nature of things that they should much longer remain an inferior cast, the Helots and the Gibeonites of their native land. This is augured by their friends\*: this is dreaded by their enemies†. They are sailing into port with a straight and rapid course. Nothing can defeat their hopes, but an unexpected dereliction of that prudent, temperate, and loyal conduct which they have hitherto pursued.

I am, &c.

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## LETTER XX.

*Waterford, August 5, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

HAVING travelled through a considerable part of Leinster and Munster, I should have been glad to see something also of Connaught, and to accept likewise of the kind

\* See the Speeches of Lord Grenville, Mr. Fox, Mr. Grattan, &c. upon the Catholic Question in 1805.

† See the Speech of Dr. Duigenan on the above-mentioned occasion.



invitation of the noble proprietor of Killarney to view the wonders of his celebrated domain. But having already exceeded the time I had prescribed to myself for this hasty excursion, and business calling me home, behold I am now at the seaport from which I am to quit this interesting island. With respect to the great commercial city from which I write, I have experienced that its intercourse with the opposite coasts of Wales, inhospitable as they are to all strangers, and particularly to their never-forgotten invaders, the Sassenachs \*, has not, in the least degree, affected the national character of its inhabitants. They are as open-hearted and hospitable, particularly to those of our countrymen who are disposed to be friendly to them, as the rest of the Irish are.

My road from the grand emporium of Cork to this of Waterford, led me through the elegant town of Fermoy, the populous town of Clonmel, and the pleasant town of Carrick upon the Suire. The pleasure, however, which I experienced in viewing these several places was much alloyed by the pain I felt in surveying the most magnificent and beautiful buildings in them, I mean the barracks. From the habitations of this denomination which you are accustomed to see in England, you will not be able to judge of the extent or sumptuousness of those in all the considerable towns and many of the villages in Ireland, the whole ex-

\* Saxons, the English people.



pense of which erections and of supporting the numerous inhabitants of them necessarily falls upon the people. The following facts, which have been communicated to me by a well-informed personage, may serve to give you some just ideas upon this subject. There are at all times from thirty to fifty thousand regular troops stationed in Ireland, besides twenty-one thousand militiamen, and numerous bodies of yeomanry; the total expense of which military establishment, including the ordnance and incidentals, consumes the whole four millions which the taxes of Ireland annually produce. Hence the whole civil establishment, the pensions, and every other expense of government in this island, is left to be provided for by a new and enormous loan, made every year for Ireland exclusively, the capital and interest of which, thus rapidly accumulating, evidently tends to a national bankruptcy. It is not, however, the expense of this military establishment which I here so much complain of, as of the system of governing the country which it bespeaks, that of jealousy and coercion. The barracks are, in the system of modern tactics, what the numerous castles were with which the Normans so severely oppressed the English after the conquest\*, and

\* Henry of Huntingdon, speaking of William the Conqueror, says: "Ad castella omnes fatigabat construenda." The Saxon Chronicler says of the same king: "Castella permisit ædificari et pauperes valde opprimi." Ad an. 1086. He elsewhere draws a most horrible picture of the sufferings of the people in consequence of these military stations, Ad. an. 1137.



with which the English themselves bridled the Irish upon the invasion of this island a century later. And yet, Sir, the British constitution is not that odious thing, nor is the reigning monarch such a tyrant, that a nation which could freely enjoy the former, and live quietly under the latter, would rush into all the guilt and horrors of rebellion to get rid of them ! Neither is the religion of our forefathers, which reared that glorious structure of the constitution, so averse to a settled and monarchical form of government, that its professors must necessarily be traitors and Jacobins ; nor are the Irish people the faithless and cold-hearted race, that they are not to be won by justice and kindness, but must necessarily be kept to their duty by chains and the sword ! In a word, Sir, the four millions per annum spent upon soldiers and barracks might be saved to government ; the 50,000 regulars might be spared for the general exigencies of the empire, and these even might be strengthened by 100,000 more of the finest recruits in the universe ; whilst the island itself would be rendered infinitely more safe than it is at present, by raising whatever number of hardy and well-trained military men or fencibles might be thought necessary, provided only Protestants had liberality enough to say : “ Since Irishmen will not give up  
 “ the faith of St. Patrick (which indeed they professed, when our ancestors were pagan savages  
 “ in the wilds of Holstein) let them retain it !  
 “ And since, according to our fundamental



“ maxim, all Christians are free to interpret the  
 “ scriptures for themselves, if they persist in  
 “ maintaining that Christ gave his real body  
 “ when he said : *Take and eat, this is my body* ;  
 “ and that he actually conferred a spiritual  
 “ jurisdiction on St. Peter and his successors,  
 “ when he said to him : *Thou art a rock,*  
 “ *and upon this rock I will build my Church* :  
 “ let them maintain it ; provided they ascribe to  
 “ the civil power, as they certainly do, the ple-  
 “ nitude of temporal authority. We will not insist  
 “ on their swearing the contrary, nor shall any  
 “ of them fare the worse for their religious te-  
 “ nets.”——“ Do you then wish,” say the bi-  
 gots, whose only religion consists in a hatred of  
 Catholics, “ that a believer in transubstantiation,  
 “ the mass, and prayers to the saints, should be  
 “ a commander in chief or a lord chancellor, and  
 “ thus domineer over us ?”——“ No,” the Ca-  
 tholics reply, “ we have never for a moment  
 “ looked up to such honours, nor aimed at such  
 “ powers. You Protestants well know that,  
 “ with all the advantages which you possess  
 “ over us, and particularly that of having the  
 “ sovereign of your religion, who alone can dis-  
 “ pense civil and military honours and autho-  
 “ rity, ages would pass away without one of our  
 “ people attaining to the above-mentioned or  
 “ any other of the first offices of the state. What  
 “ we really want are the substantial and ordinary  
 “ benefits of the constitution ; which, however,  
 “ experience convinces us we never shall enjoy



“ whilst a legal distinction subsists between us  
 “ and other subjects.”

By way of pointing out the grievances they labour under from the distinction in question, the Irish Catholics are accustomed to refer to the administration of the laws in their regard :  
 “ Without complaining,” they say, “ of intentional injustice, yet we know that human nature is human nature, and we see the many  
 “ wise checks upon the partiality and prejudices  
 “ of all persons concerned in the administration  
 “ of justice, and particularly of jurymen, which  
 “ have been devised by the constitution. This is  
 “ extended so far, that even a foreign prisoner of  
 “ war, when tried upon any indictment, is allowed to have one half of his jury composed of  
 “ foreigners. But in most of our counties, we  
 “ find that the pannels of jurymen are in a manner exclusively composed of Protestants. Indeed, how can it be otherwise, when the law,  
 “ as it stands at present, prohibits Catholics from  
 “ being sheriffs, or even under sheriffs ? These  
 “ officers being thus appointed upon a principle  
 “ of opposition to Catholics, can we expect they  
 “ should not be more or less influenced in summoning jurors, especially upon party trials in  
 “ favour of men of their own spirit ? Accordingly we prefer, when the choice rests with us,  
 “ to try our causes in England rather than in  
 “ Ireland. And it has not unfrequently happened to some of us, that after trying a cause and  
 “ gaining it on the other side of the water, we



“ we have lost it upon trying it again on this side  
“ of it.”

Do not tell me, as many do, of the wisdom of the legislature in devising those tests for shutting Catholics out of both its houses, and for preventing them from serving their country in other respects : for it is a notorious fact, that these tests were enacted, not in the wisdom, but in the folly and downright madness of the legislature and the nation. They were enacted by the Parliament which voted the reality of that chaos of absurdity called Oates's Plot, when the blood of Catholics, avowedly innocent, was libated in torrents to the national bigotry ; a period which, as Hume justly observes, “ throws a great stain on the “ British annals\*.” With respect to the Established Church, so far from these tests being necessary for her safety, it is precisely from the time of their being framed, that her health, which was so vigorous under Elizabeth and the first Stuarts, (when parliament and the great offices of the state were open to Catholics) began to decline into latitudinarianism and impotency. These tests, which were the effect of delirium in England, were the fruit of direct perfidy in Ireland, being enacted there in direct violation of a solemn treaty under the great seal of state, by virtue of which treaty the Catholics gave up their allegiance to King James, their alliance with Louis XIV. (who then had ships and troops up-

\* Hist. of Great Brit. Charles II. c. vi.



on their shore) and the possession of Limerick, with the southern and western counties of Ireland.

Supposing, however, that it were wise and necessary to govern Ireland with the iron rod rather than the olive sceptre, and for this purpose to keep up there the present enormous and expensive military establishment; yet, I should think, it would be prudent to remove the grievances, and to secure the attachment of the component parts of this establishment at least. Now two fifths of the regular soldiers, as I have stated, and four fifths of the militia are Catholics, whose religion is immoveably planted in their hearts, and who, nevertheless, (together with the sailors of their communion) are the only catholic subjects that are not now generally at liberty to practise their own religion, but are obliged to conform to another, which their consciences revolt at! Do not talk of military discipline: no such intolerance prevails in the armies of France or Austria; in the latter, the numerous Jewish soldiers are permitted to observe even their Sabbath day; and yet I presume the French and Austrian armies are as well disciplined as ours are. But I will add no more upon this subject, except a single observation which I long since made upon very good grounds, namely, that an Irish catholic soldier will never think he is fighting in his own cause, while that stands in opposition to the exercise of his religion.

A circumstance, still more extraordinary in my



eyes, is, that the government of Ireland should countenance and encourage, by the presence and attendance of its constituted authorities \* and its troops, those tumultuous rejoicings which take place throughout the country on the anniversaries of the landing of King William in Torbay, and of the battles of Aughrim and the Boyne, together with a kind of worship paid to that king's statue, which if Catholics paid to the image of the world's Redeemer, would be termed idolatrous. What is the direct tendency of all this, except to encourage the few to insult the many, by way of reminding the latter that they are a conquered people? You have subdued them, despoiled them, and chained them; but what wise end does it answer, thus wantonly to trample on your prostrate and unresisting victims, or, to speak more properly, on your own valuable subjects, by thus celebrating a public triumph over them thrice in every year? Is there any instance of such cruel and impolitic behaviour in any civilized state of ancient or modern times! The Romans triumphed but once over their conquered foes, and then admitted them to the full benefit of subjects. But to descend to modern times: did the French Catholics, in the zenith of their power, insult the Huguenots with public triumphs and rejoicings on the anniversaries of the battles of Jarnac and Moncon-

\* The Duke of Bedford gained great credit by absenting himself from these impolitic processions last year.



tour, when the former conquered the latter, or that of the capture of Rochelle, when the Protestant *Imperium in Imperio* was finally crushed? This reminds me of a query proposed by the late Tourist in Ireland\*. He asks, why the grand stone statue of his present or his late majesty, whichever it is, in the city of Cork, is painted *yellow*, he ought to have said *orange*? I am surprised that none of his friends there should have told him that it is intended thereby to signify that the king is an Orangeman, and of course that he belongs to a few thousands, instead of almost as many millions of his subjects!

In reverence, as well as obedience to the supreme legislative power, I will not touch upon two acts of parliament lately re-enacted at a time of profound quiet, concerning the breaking into houses in search of arms, and confining the inhabitants to their houses between sun-set and sun-rise, further than to observe, that they have filled with dismay the best disposed people; I mean modest women as well as loyal men, who remember what they heretofore experienced from the former operation of these laws. It is true, the enforcing of them depends upon the executive power, and in this is their hope: still they say, “our enemies have such facility of access to  
“ the Castle, and so much greater weight there  
“ than we have, that we cannot help considering  
“ ourselves as now lying at their mercy.”

\* The Stranger in Ireland, by Sir John Carr.



I know, Sir, you are impatient to ask me the momentous question, whether, after all I have seen and heard, and reflected upon in Ireland, I am of opinion that the Irish Catholics are strictly loyal, and may be depended upon by government under whatever circumstances may happen at the present eventful period? I will answer your question, if you will give me leave first to make two or three observations. In the first place, it is plain that government does not thus depend on them, by its introducing into parliament the two bills above alluded to, which it certainly knows have a tendency to inflame the disorders they are intended to cure. Secondly, it appears that Mr. Grattan, and most of our other friends in the legislative assemblies, think that the Catholics cannot be entirely depended upon, by their voting for those bills. *This, this* is the blow which reached the heart of every Irish Catholic whom I conversed with. When he heard that even Grattan had consented to disturb his midnight rest and that of his family, and to make his house a prison to him during sixteen out of the twenty-four hours in winter, he indignantly exclaimed: *Et tu, Brute?* The loyal Irishman's only comfort at this intelligence, was in perusing the brilliant and pathetic speeches of his other countryman Sheridan. For my part, I have apologized for Mr. Grattan, and have besought my friends not to weigh one night's vote against the invaluable services of many years. "Mr. Grattan," I have said to them, "is as much



“ your friend as ever he was ; but having tried  
 “ in vain to obtain for you what he conceives to  
 “ be your due, he thinks it impossible you  
 “ should not resent the disappointment ; and  
 “ therefore he wishes to hinder you from doing  
 “ yourselves and your country harm. In this he  
 “ imitates a skilful surgeon, who having fruit-  
 “ lessly endeavoured to disperse a dangerous hu-  
 “ mour, when he finds a cruel operation neces-  
 “ sary, binds his best friend.”—Thirdly, I  
 have to observe, in spite of PATRICK DUIGE-  
 NAN, (when he turned his coat, why did not  
 he change his name?) who endeavours to prove  
 all his own forefathers for fourteen hundred years,  
 up to the first Patrick, to have been traitors,  
 that the Catholics of this realm have in times of  
 trial manifested a principle of duty and loyalty,  
 in opposition to apparent interest, which no  
 other description of Christians has evinced. I  
 might prove this by an appeal to the history of  
 the English Protestants during the two catholic  
 reigns, of the Presbyterians of Scotland, of the  
 Huguenots of France, of the Gueux of the Low  
 Countries, of the Lutherans of Germany, of the  
 Calvinists of Geneva and Switzerland, &c.  
 Having made these remarks, I answer your  
 question by saying, that I have never heard a  
 seditious or disloyal speech uttered in any of the  
 numerous and diversified companies which I have  
 met in various parts of Ireland during almost six  
 weeks that I have passed in it, nor have I the  
 least reason to suppose that they will swerve from



that line of conscientious duty which the great body of them has hitherto followed : though perhaps they may not be quite so forward in volunteering their services, as if they had found these were wanted, and that they themselves were trusted. Of two things I am confident, that the stories of dangerous combinations and unlawful meetings amongst the Catholics\*, which have been propagated in the newspapers of late†, originate in the mere bigotry and malice of their enemies ; and that the Catholic Bishops and Clergy will, at all times, do their own duty in endeavouring to keep the people steady to theirs.

I will here, Sir, close my correspondence with you from Ireland, hoping, when we meet, to hear your remarks on the several subjects of it. By way of conclusion, I will present you with an extract from a pamphlet lately published at Dublin, for the sake of the sensible and pathetic address at the end of it, which I am confident is calculated to reach both the heart and the head of

\* Having called, by appointment, upon a most respectable friend, to dine and pass the evening, on my road into the South of Ireland, in company with two other friends of known loyalty, (one of whom has been distinguished by such public honours for the proofs he has given of it, that few Orangemen are likely to merit the same) I afterwards found that a messenger was sent by some of these to the Castle of Dublin, to accuse us of a seditious meeting. The charge, however, was dismissed with deserved contempt.

† The accompanying of a funeral, an ordinary meeting to dig potatoes, the planting of a May-pole, and even the amusements of little children, have been denounced to government, and published in the newspapers as insurrectionary movements.



every Englishman who is not quite brutalized by bigotry or avarice. The author is arguing against those friends of the Catholics who constantly dissuade them from petitioning parliament for a redress of grievances, on account of the alledged unseasonableness of the time, when he says : “ If  
 “ the friendly dissuasion is unable to fix a period  
 “ at which it shall be *not wrong* to break silence ;  
 “ if their friends resolve, that to attempt it this  
 “ year is improper, and in the next will be dangerous, and in the third will be unusual, unnecessary, and the symptom of punishable disaffection reviving.—If years of slavery roll on their generation, to the exit of their forefather, and bring to their last view the sad vision of a posterity of slaves, condemned by THE GREAT OATH, which gives *freedom* to all others, is not such dissuasion the acknowledgment that forbearance would be a crime ?

“ If during this endless round of evils still great, and hope deferred, and friends not yet resolved, a mighty apparition should start up between earth and heaven, intercepting the view of the world : if lightnings blaze, and bloody meteors run through the atmosphere, and shouts approach, that ‘ SLAVERY IS NO MORE : ’ if the *sufferers*, as they will do, reject the *unholy* invitation, and offer to die with the brothers who *afflicted*, rather than live with the aliens who court them : with what consistency shall it be said to those deluded,



“ broken-hearted reptiles : Come on, brave men,  
 “ and fight for *our* common freedom !”

May they not well answer to this call : “ We  
 “ will fight for you, and let Providence judge our  
 “ cause, and see our distress. If *you* conquer  
 “ with us, our doom is perpetual. The consti-  
 “ tution will be saved, and *you* say it excludes  
 “ us everlastingly. If *you* are vanquished, you  
 “ will be spared with honour ; you had fought  
 “ for the dearest things to man, which those  
 “ enemies came to wrest. But while they spare  
 “ you, they will exterminate *us* for safety and  
 “ for example. We shall fight as slaves, and  
 “ we shall perish as traitors !” \*

\* Remarks on the Protestant Barrister's Vindication, &c. by a Catholic of Dublin, pp. 71, 72.





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# APPENDIX,

*Containing two Letters addressed to a CATHOLIC  
MERCHANT of Waterford, by the Rev.  
J. MILNER, D. D. F. S. A.*

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## LETTER I.

*At Sea, August 12, 1807,*

DEAR SIR,

YOUR kind anxiety for the success of my voyage to my native island, made you wish to hear the particulars of it; and your impatience at the interruption of our conversation concerning chapel-building induced me to promise you that I would resume the subject in writing as soon as possible: I therefore take up the pen here on shipboard, by way of beginning my two-fold task; hoping, with God's permission,

F f



to finish it on the opposite coast, which there is every appearance, from the state of the weather, I shall reach in the course of twelve hours.

My journey from your city to the station of the Milford packet at Cheek Point, was the most unpleasant one I had experienced since my arrival in Ireland, from the reflection that it was the last I was to take, at least for a considerable time, in a country so interesting in itself, and so dear to me, for the numerous and valuable friends I was leaving behind me in every part of it which I had visited. Impressed with these ideas, I strayed on the shore of the grand estuary, where the united currents of the Suire, the Barrow, and the Nore, mingle with the briny waves of St. George's Channel; and my melancholy was far from being relieved by contemplating the magnificent ruins of Dunbrody Abbey on the opposite side of the harbour. I felt indignant at the memory of that sacrilegious tyrant who could envy good men and loyal subjects the privilege of worshipping God in peace and retirement; and I was mortified that the state of the tide would not allow me to visit those instructive remains, for the improvement of my heart as well as of my knowledge.

My revered friend and myself came on board the vessel yesterday evening, being the only passengers in it. But the sky threatening a squall, which actually took place in the night, the captain would not set sail till four o'clock this morning. The weather is now moderate. There



is wind enough to make us spoom briskly through the waves, and there is sea enough to give spirit to the sailing; for the worst kind of prison is that of being on shipboard in a mill-pond. Already have the pleasant coasts of Tramore Bay disappeared to my view, and Hook Head itself is perceptibly flying from me. While thus I cast a farewell look on the land of my catholic brethren, and offer up a prayer to *God the Father of mercies* \* for their welfare, a number of affecting thoughts, relating to their singular history and situation, present themselves to my mind, which I cannot help here giving vent to, by committing them to writing.

I reflect on the long continued and uninterrupted sufferings of your countrymen; no other christian nation having been for so long a time, and without remission, subject to successive calamities and degradations as yours has been. Other races of men have occasionally been visited by misfortunes and disgrace: my proud countrymen, in particular, have twice been bowed so low by the yoke of foreign conquest, as to be ashamed of the name of Englishmen, and to drink the very dregs of human misery. But each of these disgraces was of short duration. Canute, the son of the sanguinary tyrant Swaine, repressed the injustice and insolence of his Danish countrymen, and placed his English subjects on a perfect equality with them. In like manner

\* 2 Cor. i. 3.



Henry, the son of the Norman Conqueror, left no means untried to make the English forget that they were a conquered people. The success of this policy was equal to the wisdom of it : for, whereas his father had subdued England with an army of Normans, he himself subdued Normandy with an army of Englishmen. In a word, the calamities of England, both foreign and domestic, like those of other christian states, have been of a temporary nature, whereas those of Ireland seem to have been perpetual. I look in vain for the period of her greatness and glory, compared with her physical strength, wealth, situation, and other advantages : or rather, to come nearer to the idea of national as well as individual happiness, I look in vain for the period when the Irish, sitting in their native woods and cabins, could eat the produce of their herds and gardens, and enjoy the comforts of their religion unmolested by others, and at peace among themselves. On the contrary, I see nothing in their history but a succession of civil wars, foreign invasions, conquests, oppression, and religious persecution ; the latter still multiplying and refining its modes of injuring and tormenting, down to the very commencement of his present Majesty's reign. What has added a sharpness to their sufferings on the score of religion, has been that they have had to endure them at the hands of a people who were the avowed patrons of religious as well as civil freedom, and who, in fact, have left every other description of subjects



to invent and follow new modes of religion at their pleasure ; whilst they endeavoured to extort from your ancestors that original faith which the latter had received, with the very name of Christ, 1400 years ago.

These severe and long-continued sufferings, no doubt, have proved a subject of complaint and scandal to many of your countrymen. Those which the people of Italy, equally with your forefathers, had to endure 1200 years ago, proved such to the latter, as we learn from their correspondence with the cotemporary Pope, St. Gregory the Great \*. The saint, in return, admonished them, in the words of scripture, that *God chastiseth every child whom he loveth*. Indeed, how frequently, or rather generally, was God's chosen people of old in affliction and humiliation ! What had they not to endure in the bondage of Egypt, in the captivity of Babylon, from the persecuting sword of the Greeks, and the iron yoke of the Romans ! They were the most enlightened people on the face of the earth,

\* Regist. Epist. St. Greg. Mag. Lib. ix. Ep. 61. Its address is as follows : " Gregorius Quirino Episcopo, cæterisque Episcopis in Hi-  
" bernia Catholicis." From this letter, it appears that the bishops in Ireland were, at the end of the sixth century, under the same mistake concerning the intricate question of the Three Chapters, that their countryman, St. Columbanus, was at the same period in Burgundy. Nevertheless, as their error evidently proceeded from mere misinformation *with respect to a fact* which they were disposed to quit, as they actually did, upon being better informed from due authority, the holy Pope addresses them and treats them as orthodox Catholics.



in consequence of their possessing the revealed truths of heaven; yet, in what contempt and detestation were they not held by their aforesaid conquerors! What sarcasms and invectives do not the brightest and most liberal minds of pagan antiquity, a Tully, for example\*, and a Tacitus†, pour forth against them and their religion! It was the same with Christianity and Christians during the three first centuries of the Church; that is to say, during what are called her golden ages. What stupid bigots, as well as odious criminals, are not the followers of the divine Jesus represented to have been by the philosophers Tacitus and Pliny, and by the imperial Dioclesian and Julian. We, nevertheless, know that a poor christian slave was more truly wise and enlightened, as well as virtuous, than was the whole collection of these philosophers and emperors!

Considering the subject of national sufferings with reference to these facts; and reflecting, in particular, how generally God's people of old

\* Cicero, in his Oration pro L. Flacco, calls the religion of the Jews, "Barbara superstitio," and Jerusalem itself, "Maledicta civitas," adding: "Stantibus Hierosolymis, peccatisque Judæis, tamen istorum religio sacrorum à splendore hujus imperii, gravitate nominis nostri, majorum que institutis abhorrebat: nunc vero hoc magis quod illa gens, quid de nostro imperio sentiret, ostendit armis: quam cara Diis immortalibus esset docuit, quod est victa, quod elocata, quod servata (*observata*)."

† Tacit. Hist. L. v.



abandoned him in their prosperity, and returned to him in their calamities, may not we suppose that God has made use of the long continued temporal afflictions of your people as the means, in his hands, of preserving them in that inviolable attachment to the faith which they first received, and in that general disposition to piety for which they have been celebrated, as surpassing other christian nations, by ecclesiastical historians and writers, from Venerable Bede down to Pope Benedict XIV. ? \* There is one circumstance relative to the religion of the Irish Catholics, which seems almost peculiar to them, namely, that it makes an indelible impression not only upon those who live up to its precepts, but also upon those who disgrace it by their conduct. The consequence is, that there are always much better hopes of reclaiming a profligate Irish Catholic during his life time, or else of his spontaneous repentance previously to his death, than there are with respect to wicked Christians of other countries. Whether this is owing to a peculiar mercy towards your people, as our ancient historians, English † as well

\* In Epist. ad Archiep. and Ep. Heb. die 15 Aug. A. D. 1741. Vid. Hibern. Dominicanam, p. 21.

† “ Undecim diebus, totidemque noctibus (S. Patricius) in  
“ cacumine montis Eli jejunavit, id est Cruachaneli; in quo colle,  
“ in aere tres petitiones pro his Hibernensibus qui fidem Christi  
“ reciperent clementer postulavit. Prima ejus petitio fuit, ut fertur  
“ a Scotis, quod unusquisque reciperet pœnitentiam credentium,  
“ licet in extremo vitæ suæ. Secunda, ne a barbaris consumeren-



as Irish tell us, or rather to the care of their pastors, in deeply imprinting the maxims of the gospel on their infant minds, the fact is indisputable, as most of those who have had much experience in the sacred ministry, particularly in death-bed scenes, can testify as well as myself.

After all, Sir, I grant we must not pretend to trace, with any thing like certainty, the inscrutable ways of the Almighty, and it is certainly in the order of his providence, as the example of the saints and the doctrine of the Church, expressed in her liturgy, prove, to seek for peace and tranquillity, by procuring the redress of our temporal evils when it is in our power to obtain them. On the same principle we are bound to entertain a sense of gratitude toward those persons who have been instrumental in conferring these temporal blessings upon us, and therefore towards his Majesty, and many other distinguished characters now living, whom it is unnecessary to name. The civil advantages which the Catholics have obtained during the present reign have certainly been very great, and it is frequently asserted, (though chiefly, I believe, by those persons who are sorry we have obtained any benefits at all) that all the positive grievances of the Catholics are redressed, and hence that they have attained to the *ne plus ultra* of their constitu-

“tur in æternum. Tertia, ut non supervivat aliquis credentium in  
“adventu judicii.” Nennius Histor. Britonum. Vide etiam Mat.  
West. an. 491.



tional claims ; in a word, that it is no penalty nor hardship to be deprived of those further privileges, which the law (with what consistency I do not inquire) has reserved for persons who do not believe in Transubstantiation.

Supposing, for the sake of the argument, that all positive penal laws against Catholics were actually redressed, yet we are the best, because we are experimental judges, whether the mere exclusive laws against us, do or do not act as penalties. I should be glad to ask one of these ethical politicians, if in consequence of some whimsical exclusive law regarding the colour of his hair, or some other circumstance totally irrelevant to his civil and social duties, he found himself held in contempt as a person not to be trusted, nor placed on their level by persons of his own rank, if, I say, in this case, he would not feel he was suffering from a law both penal and unjust ? In short, if disgrace be not a penalty, where is the suffering of standing for a short time in the pillory ? That Catholics, and particularly Irish Catholics, do experience this contemptuous treatment from their fellow subjects in consequence of the partiality of the laws constant experience proves. Heretofore when the latter were excluded from the benefit of the laws, and when it was held no crime to kill a mere Irishman, they were supposed by the vulgar to be Ouran-outangs, or brutes of some species or other, and accordingly scores of affidavits were made by serious religious Englishmen, from the testimony of their own



eye sight, that the Irish people were found to have tails growing from behind their bodies, a quarter of a yard long\*. At present, when the laws are more equitable, and are content with requiring that no Irish Catholic shall be entrusted to carry a military dispatch in quality of aid-de-camp, or to summon a jury as an under sheriff, they are barely looked upon as a race of savages by the English people. Accordingly the term *Wild Irish* is as familiar in the English language as that of *Wild beasts*.

But the particular exclusion of Catholics from the offices of sheriff and under sheriff, is not a mere disgrace, as you well know, for it is attended with the most serious ill consequences, as your countrymen frequently experience. In like manner the existence of an "Incorporated Society for promoting Protestant Schools" is the continuation of one of the most odious and fatal kinds of persecution devised by the religious politicians of the last century. In fact, how much more wise a thing would it be to employ fifty or sixty thousand pounds of the annual revenues of Ireland, a great part of which is raised upon the Catholics themselves†, in buying up the

\* See Hay's History of the Insurrection, last page, and the authorities quoted by him. This opinion of the original Irish having tails seems to have been generally propagated by the Puritans in the reign of Charles I.

† 25,000*l.* or rather, I believe, 30,000*l.* are annually voted for the Charter-schools. Their landed property belonging to the public must amount to as much, or probably to a great deal more.



tithes of the poor, than in purchasing their children, and educating them to hate and persecute their fathers, mothers, and brothers. Our statesmen complain of the violent animosity which actuates the different religionists in Ireland: but are not they themselves, in a great measure, the cause of it, while they lavish the public money upon such institutions as the Charter Schools? For my part, I cannot help thinking, that this is the case, from knowing the heart-burning which these schools provoke among the Catholics, and the spirit of contempt, hatred, and resentment which these seminaries labour to infuse into their purchased victims against the Catholics. I have now lying before me what is called **THE PROTESTANT CATECHISM** of the **INCORPORATED SOCIETY**, as also that of the Catholic Metropolitans, called the **GENERAL CATECHISM**, both of them lately published. A slight comparison between these clearly shews the different spirits by which they have been dictated. The former industriously instils into its pupils an abhorrence of the Catholics as idolaters, a hatred of them as traitors, and a dread of them as murderers! In defiance of common charity, of the repeated declarations and acts of the legislature, and of constant actual experience; it teaches the catholic infants, whom its patrons have purloined, that “the  
 “papists (namely their parents as well as other  
 “Catholics) hold that faith is not to be kept



“ with heretics, and that the Pope can absolve  
 “ subjects from their oath of allegiance to sove-  
 “ reigns\*.” It instructs them to believe that these  
 their parents and other Catholics, are persuaded  
 that those “ who differ from them,” and of  
 course the children themselves, are to be “ rooted  
 “ out by fire and sword.” To strengthen this  
 belief, the misrepresented histories of Queen  
 Mary’s persecution †, and of the Irish mas-  
 sacre ‡, are exhibited to the frightened imagination

\* Protestant Catechism of the Incorporated Society, part. ii. p. 9.  
 4th ed.

† I have always lamented and condemned the persecutions in  
 Mary’s reign. It must, nevertheless, be remembered, that deprived,  
 as she had been, of her hereditary throne, by Cranmer, Ridley,  
 Sandys, Poynt, Dudley, and the other heads of the Reformation,  
 she never persecuted any of them till two years afterwards, when  
 they set on foot a second rebellion against her, under Wyat, &c.  
 Such was the case in England; in the mean time the Protestants in  
 Ireland remaining quiet, were never once molested during the whole  
 of this catholic reign, though it is evident they might have been  
 exterminated by a word speaking.—“ The Irish Roman Catholic  
 “ bigots,” exclaims the eloquent Parnell: “ the Irish Roman Ca-  
 “ tholics are the only sect that ever resumed power without exercising  
 “ vengeance i” Hist. Apolog. p. 47.

‡ No part of Irish history has been more maliciously misrep-  
 resented than that of the year 1641. If the Irish Catholics then  
 took up arms, let it be remembered that the English Protestants and  
 the Scotch Presbyterians had previously taken up arms; but with  
 this difference, the Catholics armed in their own defence and in de-  
 fence of their sovereign, the Protestants and Presbyterians armed  
 for the destruction of both, and they succeeded in bringing the King  
 to the scaffold. 2dly, If in the confusion and horrors of the civil war  
 in Ireland many Protestants were murdered by lawless Catholic  
 panditti, an infinitely greater number of Catholics were slaughtered



of these poor infants. In the mean time the important duties of citizens, subjects, and Christians, are hardly so much as hinted at throughout the whole Catechism.—How different in all these respects is the code of christian and moral institutes which the Catholic Prelates of Ireland have drawn up for the instruction of their unbought pupils. In this there is no mention of the numerous and revolting blasphemies and immoralities with which the works of Luther and Calvin abound ; no notice of the perfidy, treason, and rebellion taught and practised by Cranmer, Ridley, Knox, and every head of the reformation in every country where it has prevailed, nor so much as a hint at the countless hosts of catholic victims whom Protestantism has immolated, in the pure spirit of religious persecution, in England, France, Germany, and especially in Ireland, during the reigns of Elizabeth, James I. Charles I. and Oliver Cromwell. Instead of copying, in these particulars, the example of the dignified authors and patrons of the Protestant Catechism, the Catholic Prelates have framed their Catechism to enforce the general duties of Christians, subjects and citizens, particularly submission to law-

in cold blood by Protestants; and the latter were the first to begin the diabolical work of massacre, as Clarendon owns, namely, in the island Magee, where near 3000 unarmed and peaceable men, women, and children, were murdered, mostly in their sleep. See the Trial of the R. Catholics of Ireland, by Henry Brooke, Esq. ; also Dr. Curry's History of the Civil Wars of Ireland, vol. i. book 5.



ful authority\*, and charity† to all mankind.—The attention of our great statesmen is otherwise taken up (though it is a question whether it can be taken up with a matter of greater importance), or else I should be glad to ask them, if, after this brief view of the doctrine and spirit of the Irish Protestant and the Irish Catholic Catechism, they really think it is for the benefit of the state to pay 60,000l. every year in order to get a certain number of catholic children instructed in the former rather than in the latter? And secondly, whether it would not be more wise to employ that sum in paying the tythe-tax of the poor cottagers; thus enabling them to rear their own children, and instruct them in their own Catechism? I would say one word more to the illustrious personages in

\* Question. What are the duties of subjects to the temporal powers? Answer. To be subject to them, to honour and obey them, *not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake; for such is the will of God*, 1 Pet. ii.—Q. Is it sinful to resist or combine against established authorities, or to speak with contempt or disrespect of those who rule over us? A. Yes. St. Paul says: *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers: he that resisteth the power resisteth God's ordinance: and they that resist purchase to themselves damnation*, Rom. xiii. General Catech. Lesson xvii. p. 29.

† Q. Who is my neighbour, whom I am bound to love? A. Mankind of every description, and without any exception of persons; even those who injure us, and differ from us in religion.—Q. What particular duties are required of me by that rule? A. Never to injure your neighbour by word or deed, in his person, property, or character; to wish well to him, to pray for him, and always to assist him as far as you are able in his spiritual and corporal necessities. Lesson xix. p. 34. ed. 4.



question, if I had an opportunity, to the following effect : “ As far, my Lords and Gentlemen, as  
 “ relates to exciting the hatred and detestation  
 “ of the charter-school children, and the other  
 “ uninstructed Protestants of Ireland, against its  
 “ general population, no doubt these public  
 “ charges of perfidy, disloyalty, barbarity, and  
 “ idolatry \*, answer their purpose. This, how-  
 “ ever, I know you consider as an evil, rather  
 “ than a benefit. But, with respect to the object  
 “ which you so earnestly wish for, namely, that  
 “ all your subjects should be of one religion, and  
 “ that the religion of the state, be assured that  
 “ neither the Irish Protestant Catechism, nor  
 “ the Bishop of London’s Confutation of Po-  
 “ pery, nor De Coetlogan’s Abominations of  
 “ the Church of Rome, nor all the interpreta-  
 “ tions of the Revelations, either by learned  
 “ Warburtonian lecturers\*, or unlearned coun-  
 “ try clergymen, ever gain one single proselyte  
 “ from the Catholics in either Island. The fact  
 “ is, Catholics of every description are perfectly  
 “ conscious they have been taught a creed dia-  
 “ metrically opposite to that on which the ob-  
 “ jections of these adversaries are grounded. What  
 “ the arguments really are, which, from time to

\* Prot. Catech. Part iv. p. 24.

\* Bishop Warburton has left a salary for a preacher, to prove every year at Lincoln’s Inn Chapel, that the Pope is Antichrist ; who, if he should succeed, would prove at the same time, that the bishop himself had borrowed his orders, his liturgy, and his Christianity, from this chief agent of Satan.



“ time, cause certain catholic noblemen, gen-  
 “ tlemen, and clergymen, to abandon the religi-  
 “ on of their ancestors, need not be pointed out  
 “ to you : since the general behaviour of these  
 “ persons during their lives, and more particu-  
 “ larly at their death, sufficiently manifests them.  
 “ Let it suffice to say, that these are so well  
 “ understood among Catholics, that even when  
 “ the pastor of a numerous flock has conformed  
 “ to the established church, and has published  
 “ writings to induce them to follow his exam-  
 “ ple, he has not succeeded with one of them \* ;  
 “ no not even with one amongst his own ser-  
 “ vants. On the other hand, that these argu-  
 “ ments are not unknown to Protestants, Dr.  
 “ Duigenan is a witness beyond all excep-  
 “ tion†.”

But the examination of this Catechism of the  
 Incorporated Society, which was sent to me by a  
 friend a few days ago, has caused me to digress  
 widely from my subject : I therefore return to  
 the consideration of it, but that only for a few  
 minutes longer. It is perfectly inconceivable to  
 my mind, that men of sense and candour should  
 so often assert, and that even in their solemn  
 parliamentary speeches, that there is no positive

\* Some years ago the priest of Worcester, the Rev. H. Wharton,  
 conformed to the establishment, and published a book to justify his  
 conduct ; as did also the Rev. Mr. Hawkins, another priest, who  
 then resided at Worcester ; but not a single Catholic abandoned his  
 religion. Every one knew the motives of these apostate priests.

† See above, p. 70.



grievance of the Catholics left unredressed, when they cannot help knowing, from being so often reminded of it, (I myself have been reminding them of it in various publications during these twenty years\*) that catholic soldiers and sailors, at the present time, to the number of more than 200,000 men, are not yet free to practise their own religion, and are forced, under the pain of military punishment, to conform to a worship repugnant to their consciences. What adds a fresh sting to this persecution is, that it is exercised in the teeth of an act of parliament, namely, the act of 1793. This act makes it lawful to every Irish subject, except about forty individuals, to profess and practise the catholic religion; but in the first place, if the soldier, in obedience to orders, crosses the sea, whether to Britain, Gibraltar, the West Indies, or any other British settlement, he is immediately informed that his act of parliament is of no force there. Secondly, while even he remains in Ireland, his Officer, if he is an Orangeman, or otherwise of an intolerant or irreligious disposition, fails not to answer him, when he pleads the privilege of the act of 1793: "I know nothing of your act of parliament, but I know that the first article of war requires you to attend the established worship; and go to

\* See a Sermon on the Recovery of his Majesty, preached at Winchester, April 23, 1787.—I have never ceased, in various publications and private memorials to men in power, to urge this grievance. The time is come when it must be redressed.



“ it you shall, or to prison and the halberts.”— I am astonished that men of reflection should not see how unwise it is to leave so dangerous a weapon, as that which I have been pointing out, to be taken up in a moment of danger by a Hoche or a Humbert !

This, however, my dear Friend, and all your other grievances put together, are a mere trifle, compared with the wide wasting, exterminating persecution, with which you are threatened by a man who, from his connections, is supposed to be one of the most powerful men in the empire, and who lately filled one of the first situations in your island. Yes, if the legislature could be persuaded to follow up, and the public to approve of the plans of the nobleman I allude to, Ireland would become, in the reign of George III. a scene of more horrible carnage than it was in those of Elizabeth and Oliver Cromwell. What he professedly aims at, is the new-modelling of your unchangeable form of ecclesiastical government. He is bent upon the annihilation of all Catholic Metropolitans, Bishops, and even Parish Priests ; for no other reason, than because the state has chosen to adopt this same apostolical form of government for the Established Church. Following up this rule, he will equally forbid the use of our Missal and Breviary, because the Common Prayer Book is almost entirely taken out of them. Again, he is resolved upon depriving the Catholic Church of the essential and inalienable right of every society, that of



excluding atrocious and refractory offenders from its communion. But to make an end of this matter : it is impossible the learned author of the present system should be ignorant, that the innovations which he here proposes go to far greater lengths of schism than those contained in the famous **CIVIL CONSTITUTION OF THE CLERGY** enacted by the French national assembly ; the enforcing of which constitution caused the murder of 24,000 clergymen, and the banishment of 64,000 others, independently of lay sufferers, without accomplishing its object : nor has this personage any reason to suppose that the Catholic Bishops and Priests, and Laity of Ireland, if called upon to suffer the extremity of the law in defence of their religion, would shew less firmness than their brethren in France have done.

But while bigotry thus threatens you on one side, irreligion, half serious and half jocose, assaults you on the other. Your celebrated chronologist, Archbishop Usher, with some of his followers, near two centuries ago, endeavoured to persuade your fathers that your apostle St. Patrick, and your other holy bishops, abbots, monks, and hermits, during several centuries, were not Catholics, but Protestants. The method, however, that he adopted for this purpose, which consisted in distorting and misrepresenting the tenets of the ancient fathers and doctors, was, as a late writer says, “ A terrible way of de-



“fending Protestantism\*.” Accordingly, it is at the present day completely given up. But a still more daring attempt upon your ancient faith is now made by one of your degenerate countrymen, a Dr. Ledwich, in denying the very existence of that apostle to whom he himself, no less than you, is indebted for being a Christian. What he would have you believe is, that no such man as St. Patrick ever had a being; but that, somehow or another, the ecclesiastical writers of the ninth century, in England, Ireland, France, Germany, and Italy†, conspired together in order to make the world believe that there had been such a personage, namely, in the fifth century, and that he converted the Irish nation to the faith of Christ. Dr. Ledwich tells you, moreover, that this plot succeeded completely, and that it was never discovered till he, Dr. Ledwich, wrote his book. Insulting as these paradoxes are to common sense; outrages as they are to the honour of literature; yet, in an age of novels and newspapers, they have gained credit with some writers; and

\* See the New and General Biographical Dictionary, Art. Usher.

† To the other authorities from the ninth century, for St. Patrick's existence and character, mentioned above in page 94, add that of Wandelbertus, a deacon and monk of Prume Abbey, who in his versified Martyrology writes thus on March 17:

“Bisque Octona tuo PATRICI nomine pollet

“Scotica gentilem miserate per oppida cultum.”

See D'Acherie's Spicileg. vol. 5.



it is easy to foresee, that if they are not opposed, they will, on the joint credit of their novelty and irreligion, become fashionable opinions! There is no danger that you or your catholic friends will take up with these particular extravagances of Dr. Ledwich. You are not likely to discard your great apostle St. Patrick to the region of "fictitious pagan deities" without the shadow of an argument, upon the authority and recommendation of Dr. Ledwich: but I take this opportunity of cautioning you against trusting to this writer as an antiquary upon any subject whatsoever that he treats of; assuring you, that his book called *The Antiquities of Ireland*, is chiefly distinguished by the singularity and extravagance of the opinions which it contains, and the confidence and disingenuity of the author in supporting them.

But I must here apprise you, that I have treated the subjects last mentioned, and indeed most of the others here touched upon, at much greater length in a series of letters which I have addressed from your island to a friend of mine in England; and as I am convinced the perusal of them would afford some pleasure to you and my other numerous friends in your island, and some useful information on several important points, to many persons who stand greatly in need of it in the country to which I am hastening, I am strongly inclined to get these letters back into my hands, in order to revise and publish them. Should I do this, I am aware it will be to my own cost, as I



am sensible what an outcry they will occasion against me. One clergyman will preach and print a sermon, of which I and my writings will form the subject matter for the beginning, the middle, and the end \*. Another will probably snatch up some half sentence, and having dragged it out of its context, and dressed it up in his own malicious comments, will hold it up to the public as a specimen of my immoral or seditious doctrine. In vain should I protest against the caricature; in vain should I appeal to the whole tenor of my doctrine; he will stun me and the public with these repeated vociferations: "I hold you to your own words.—Fire shall not burn this out of me." I had not such an adversary to deal with when I wrote my former letters †; for Dr. Sturges is both a gentleman and a scholar‡. It is true, he tried the strength of his pen, and his friends tried their weight in parliament; while other friends tried the efficacy of certain specific arguments upon me, which are generally found convincing: still there was in that controversy no contemptible quibbling, no indecorous brawling, no confident impugning of the known truth. From adversaries who can descend to take up

\* See the Sermon preached before the University of Oxford, at St. Mary's, Nov. 5, 1805.

† Letters to a Prebendary.

‡ Whilst this work is in the press, I hear with infinite regret of the death of that respectable and learned gentleman.

"Spargete flores, &c.———"

"Has saltem accumulem donis et fungar inani

"Munere."



these weapons, I must ever turn with disgust, hoping that they are not employed or abetted by persons of greater respectability than themselves.

There is, however, another set of combatants, who, though they should make use of the most unfair weapons, it is not lawful for us authors to despise; I mean, the Minos, the Æacus, and the Rhadamanthus of the regions of literature. Now as I am provided with no golden bough, nor any medicated sop, I can expect nothing but the severest sentence and treatment from them for this my present bold intrusion into their domains. The latter I believe to be the more essential requisite, and might alone suffice, if I could agree to make use of it, to secure me from the severity of each of the two parties into which the dusky quorum is divided. But to speak without figure: if in issuing these letters to the public, I would but compound with the religion and the irreligion of the times; if I would but make a few slight sacrifices of the cause which I support, I make no doubt that I should find my own private account, by so doing, in the reports of the Reviewers, and even the Antijacobin might once more speak favourably of a Papist\*. But,

\* How did this Review cheer me and praise me, when I published the first volume of my History of Winchester, as may be seen by looking back to its numbers for February and March 1791! But now, I



with God's help, I hope to keep on my steady course, in the pursuit of truth alone, till the end of it, content with no other reward for the present than that of conscience.

I find I must reserve for another letter the subject of ecclesiastical architecture, which I had originally designed should have been the principal matter of this. I shall therefore, by way of finishing with you at present, take the liberty of giving you, and our other friends, a few words of advice.—Circumstances then, dear Sir, have certainly been irritating; the times are critical and eventful; but for heavens sake keep yourselves cool: a great part of your past miseries have been owing to the intemperate warmth of some of your countrymen. Be patient: for it is unquestionably better “to bear the ills we have, “ than fly to others that we know not of.” Remind the poor people, over whom your influence extend, of the accumulated misery which too many of them drew upon themselves nine years ago, by listening to the exaggerated histories, false alarms, and delusive promises of anarchists, and agitators of different manners and habits, and of a different creed from their own, men who sought not the relief of the people, but their own aggrandizement and emolument. They excited and fanned the flame, and then, seeking their safety

make no doubt, it will discover that I am ignorant, stupid, and even a Jacobin. Still they are not my talents nor my sentiments, but the interests of the Antijacobin, which have undergone a change.



in flight, they left it to be extinguished in the blood of their deluded victims.—If I had the voice of thunder, I would cry throughout your island, at this momentous period in particular: “Irishmen, be cool: command your temper. “Your evils are working their own cure: they “can last but a very little time longer. In a “word, increasing as you are so rapidly in “numbers, wealth, and influence, you must find “your proper level in society, and your weight “in the scale of the empire. ‘Those statesmen “who pretend to fix the *ne plus ultra* of your “privileges at any point whatever short of those “enjoyed by the rest of your fellow subjects, “might just as well usurp omnipotence, and say “to the flowing tide: *hither shalt thou come, but “no further: and here shall thy proud waves be “stayed\**.”

In a word, be loyal, remembering the obligation incumbent upon us all, both by the natural and the divine law, of being *subject to the higher powers—not only for wrath but also for conscience sake*; and of *rendering to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour*†. Remember also the additional obligation of loyalty which we have contracted by the strict oath of allegiance which we have taken. We are constantly accused of making the apparent interest of our religion the only rule of our loyalty; but

\* Job xxxviii. 11

† Rom. xiii.



the history of Christendom, during the three last centuries, demonstrates the falsehood of this charge, and shews that it may be retorted on those who bring it. Let one example suffice: when Edward VI. died, was there a single reformer of any eminence who was not engaged in Lady Jane's rebellion? When Mary died, was there a single Catholic, and the nation was then almost all Catholic, to oppose the succession of Elizabeth?

But, whilst I exhort you to be faithful to your sovereign, let me not forget to admonish you of the fidelity you owe to your God. You will gather from what I have already said, that I consider your approaching emancipation as an event which is likely to be trying to your religious constancy and piety. To speak the truth, I think I see that the very prospect of this change makes a few individuals affect an air of latitudinarianism totally inconsistent with the tenets of catholicity, and disposes them, in particular, to barter away the inalienable spiritual rights of the Church for their own temporal advantage. This system of indemnification, at the expense of the Church, has been acted upon to a great extent of late upon the continent of Europe. But then they were only temporal possessions which were thus disposed of: whereas, in the instance to which I allude, the vital interests of Christ's spiritual kingdom have been held up to sale by those who never had or can have a right to dispose of them. Nevertheless, whatever may



be the dispositions and conduct of a few individuals, I trust, in the divine protection, that the great majority of the Irish Catholics under all circumstances, whether prosperous or adverse, will, in conformity with their conduct, during the fourteen past centuries, continue faithful in the belief and practice of every tittle of their unchangeable religion till the very end of time : or rather, until that day previous to it, when, if the prayer of Patrick, upon mount Chruachaneli was heard, the vast Atlantic will cause Ireland to disappear from the face of the globe, in order to spare his beloved children the experience of those horrors which Christ tells us, will cause men to *wither away for fear*, and cry out to *the mountains, fall upon us, and to the hills cover us*\* !

Having just now been upon deck, I find we are off the light-house of the Small Islands, as they are called. This light-house has much the appearance of an Irish Round Tower, though, instead of standing in an open country, it is placed on the pinnacle of a small insulated rock which just appears above the bosom of the deep, at the distance of twenty miles from the Welsh coast. In this narrow and dreary cell, seeing nothing but the “wild and wasteful ocean,” hearing nothing but the perpetual

\* Luke xxi. 26. xxiii. 30.



lashing of its surges, mingled with the howling of contending winds, and the shrill screaming of cormorants, three poor human beings live immured from one three months to another, when they receive a fresh supply of oil for their lamps, and of provisions for themselves. Their only pleasure, in the mean time, is to drink whiskey, and their only prospect is to have it in their power to drink it as long as they live. On the other hand, if there are charms in heavenly contemplation and devotion beyond all other pleasures which can be tasted here upon earth; and, unless the inspired penmen deceive us in assuring us that there are such, we may well believe the ancient inhabitants of the round towers\*, the anchorets, enjoyed these, and thus received an ample indemnification for the austerities they endured, even that hundred fold reward which Christ has promised here upon earth to those who

\* In deciding, as I unequivocally do, that the round towers of Ireland were the cells of certain anchorets in the early ages of its Christianity (though not of all anchorets or *Inclusi*; for doubtless many lived in cells upon the ground), I enter my protest against the idea of penitentiary houses, in which the hermit is supposed to remove from one floor to another, according to the terms of his penance, or in which a number of penitents were shut up in the different floors of the building. To form a right judgment in matters of this nature the antiquary ought to be acquainted with the general discipline of the Catholic Church, and the particular manners and opinions of the monks and hermits during the early and middle ages.



abandon satisfactions in this world for his sake\*.  
—But I must here conclude with assuring you  
that

I am, Dear Sir,

Your's, &c.

J. M.

## LETTER II.

*Milford, August 13, 1807.*

DEAR SIR,

WITHIN two hours from the concluding of my letter to you of yesterday, I found myself at the entrance of the celebrated haven of this place. I was surprised and delighted with the capaciousness of this bold inlet, capable, as it is, of containing all the ships of war in the world, with its numerous and diversified bays, and with the smooth and tranquil state of its waters, compared with the boisterous waves of the Irish Sea which I had just quitted. This circumstance is owing to the haven's being so completely landlocked.

\* Matt. xix. 29.



I have walked from the hotel this morning to enjoy the different views of this charming place, which rises in the form of an amphitheatre above the majestic bason of the haven, and commands every part of it, with the numerous vessels in different directions upon it. The town is rapidly increasing in size and importance: but were it within a hundred miles of London, it would increase at a much quicker rate; and, I make no doubt, would soon become the largest place within an equal distance of it. Still the haven cannot vie, either with the bay of Dublin or the harbour of Cork in grandeur or beauty.

After the sea prospects, the object which pleased me most in my rambles, was a small, plain, new-built church, upon an eminence, near the entrance of the town, which from the hasty view I had of its outside, appeared to me as faultless a specimen of pointed architecture as I had almost ever met with from modern skill. I was told that the architect is a French emigrant, by trade a ship-builder, who resides near Milford; and I make no doubt that his success in the present work is owing to his having closely copied some ancient church in the neighbourhood. The mention of this unexpected sight, brings me to the subject which ought to have formed the matter of my last letter to you, that of ecclesiastical architecture, or rather the branch of it which regards the building of Catholic Chapels. I must premise, however, that I am not myself an architect, in the lowest sense of the term: all that I can pretend to in this line is,



some little experience in it, and a few obvious reflections which I have made concerning it. You will judge for yourself of the propriety of my rules and observations, and adopt them or not, in the chapel you talk of erecting, just as you please.

I own, I was delighted to find the spirit which I every where met with amongst the Catholics of your country, after I had quitted the capital, for rebuilding their chapels in a better style than they have heretofore been in; and I can readily believe the anecdote you told me concerning the vestry that was held in your neighbouring parish\*. I have been informed that you are indebted, for the improvements which are going on in so many places, to the bigotry of the Orange yeomanry, and the fury of the soldiers during the rebellion of 1798. Not content with destroying whatever houses they found vacant at that period, they every where burnt down the chapels. For the loss of these, government, with equal justice and wisdom, made an adequate compensation, by means of which, and of voluntary contributions, they are in a

\* The anecdote is as follows. A parish church in the county of Waterford being in great decay, a vestry of the protestant inhabitants of the parish was held, to consider of the means of raising money to repair it. No such means, however, occurring to the meeting, one of the company spoke to this effect: "Gentlemen, if you will follow my advice, I will be answerable for the success of it. Let us make a present of our church to the Papists. They will not fail to put it into good repair; and when that is done we can take it from them, as we did before."



great measure restored with great advantage. The example of your counties, in which these transactions took place, has stimulated the Catholics in other counties, that were never disturbed, to exert themselves in the same line of chapel improvement. I cannot recollect half the places where I saw new and elegant chapels, either built or in the act of building: the following places, however, strike my memory at the present moment; Timolin, Castle Dermot, Tullow, Carlow, Thurles, Cashel, Cahir, Our Lady's at Cork, Carrick on Suire, and St. Nicholas at Waterford. All these erections, however, must yield in exterior beauty to your principal chapel, or rather church, at Waterford. Its extensive and lofty façade, with its massive, but regular pillars, pilasters, entablature, and pediment, the latter surmounted with an ornamented cross, and charged in the tympanum with appropriate ecclesiastical ornaments, carved and gilt, forms not only the greatest ornament of your great city, but is the noblest front of any modern place of worship I recollect having seen in Ireland. Still I must give the preference, for an inside view, to Our Lady's at Cork; and you know, Sir, it is the spirit of our religion, to bestow the greatest pains and expense upon the interior decorations of our churches and chapels, while other modern denominations of Christians exhibit their magnificence and ornaments on the outside of their places of worship; imitating, in this respect, the example of the pagan



Greeks and Romans. It remains to be seen whether the new grand chapel at Thurles will or will not, when finished, exceed each of these chapels, both in exterior and interior grandeur and elegance\*.

The chief and the general fault of all these new built chapels consists in the incongruous mixtures of different orders and styles of architecture which is observable in them. In your grand church, for example, and in the elegant one which is almost finished at Carrick, I remarked that the windows and the inside arches of the intercolumnations are sharply pointed, while the general style of each chapel is Grecian. I recollect also, that the vaulting of your chapel is executed partly in circular arches, partly in pointed groins; and it is plain to me, from conversing with two or three of your architects, that they consider it

\* Interior dimensions of the three above-mentioned chapels.

	Feet.
Waterford Great Chapel, length	105
Breadth of the nave and side aisles,	65
Length of the transept, the chapel being in the form of a cross,	95
Height to the groined ceiling,	50
Our Lady's Chapel, or Church of Cork, having three altars,	
length	109
Breadth of the nave and side aisles,	62
Length of the transept or cross aisle,	90
Height of the vaulting,	42
New Chapel at Thurles, length	120
Length of the porch,	20
Length of the transept,	120
Height of the vaulting,	34
Height of the tower,	100



as a proof of their taste and knowledge, thus to combine different styles in the same building, and even to invent new styles of their own. Seeing the master builder, at one of the above-mentioned new chapels, about to place a whimsical sort of capital for the buttment of a pointed arch, I took the liberty of asking him, what order or style that capital belonged to? He answered me: "It is of no particular order or style; but it is a fancy Corinthian capital."—"Do you, then, really fancy, Sir," said I, "that you can invent a more beautiful Corinthian capital, than that which has obtained the approbation of all civilized nations in all ages?"

The first canon, or rule, then, for chapel-building, which, Sir, I shall venture to lay down for your observance, and of the other parties concerned in the intended erection, is that, after proper consultation with respect to beauty, propriety, expense, and practicability, you should fix, not only upon the general style, but also upon the particular order or period of architecture in which you will have it executed, and that you should give the most precise and rigid orders, that this style and order be adhered to; not only in the essential, but also in the minuter parts of your building, and in the very ornaments and furniture of it. You will find, in your illustrious countryman's \* *Treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful*, the principles upon which a number of

\* Burke.



uniform members of a building are calculated to give pleasure ; and, without reading this treatise, you will experience the pleasure in question, from contemplating your building when finished, if it be so constructed. Your practice of introducing so much pointed work into your chapels as you do, shews that you see the beauty of this style, and its peculiar propriety for ecclesiastical buildings : but again let me impress my first canon upon your mind. Good taste and good sense require that you should adopt the point in all your arches, or in none of them. The law of unity and simplicity applies to the other arts, namely, to painting; statuary, music, and even poetry, no less than to building.

“ Denique, sit quod vis, simplex duntaxat et unum.”

Horat. de Art. Poet.

You will gather from what I have just now said, that I myself greatly prefer the pointed style, which by some persons is called the Norman, by others the Gothic style \*, especially for

\* I agree with those persons who object to the term *Gothic*, as applied to the pointed style of architecture, that it was invented by the artists who restored the Grecian style, as a word of reproach to the former. Nevertheless, since the word does not convey any such disgraceful idea at present, and the style itself is generally admired ; since the inhabitants of Gothland are now a civilized people, and the sovereign of Sweden values himself in quality of King of the Goths and Vandals ; and since the Normans themselves, to whom the invention of the beautiful style in question is ascribed, were themselves, two centuries before that period, as great destroyers of the arts as ever the Goths had been, I own the word Gothic does not raise my stomach in the same degree it does those of some of my friends.



religious edifices. Indeed, it was invented and perfected in the zenith of the Church's wealth and power, by ecclesiastical personages, for religious purposes; that is to say, for augmenting the solemnity of divine worship, and exciting the attention, awe, and devotion of those who assisted at it; and certainly, never did any invention of the human mind more completely answer its intended purpose than this has done. For where is the mortal so stupid, so dissipated, or so irreligious, who does not experience something of these awful and religious feelings at his entrance among the long-drawn aisles, the aspiring arches and pinacles, and ramified tracery of an ancient cathedral! Since the plundering of ancient reformers, and the fury of later fanatics, and the more destructive caprice of fantastic modern improvers, these venerable piles are but, as it were, the skeletons of what they were three hundred years ago; yet where is the being, possessed of a soul, who will say that the paragon of modern art and magnificence, St. Paul's Cathedral, disposes his mind for prayer and contemplation in the same degree that York, Lincoln, and Winchester Cathedrals do \*?

It has been pretended by different writers, that

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\* I would have added to this list Westminster Abbey, were it not now a mere statuary shop, where huge blocks of stone, ill wrought, no less than well wrought, and some of them not wrought at all, confusedly cover all the beautiful arch-work of the walls, and now begin to fill the open spaces of the aisles and nave.



this grand effort of human ingenuity and industry, the pointed style, was borrowed from the Eastern Saracens, the Western Moors of Spain, and the Northern Goths of Scandinavia; as if there had been more native genius and grandeur of conception, more ardent religious feelings, and greater encouragement for ecclesiastical architecture among these several barbarians, than among our own magnificent and ingenious Normans of the 12th and 13th centuries! Let any intelligent person survey the vast and expensive cathedrals and abbey churches which the Norman prelates began to build in every part of England soon after the conquest, the substance of which still remain, and then let him tell me whether so much ardour, so much ingenuity, and so much liberality as they severally manifested for the advancement of ecclesiastical architecture, was not likely to discover in it whatever was most beautiful and perfect? But I have elsewhere fully confuted these several systems\*, and have shewn, amongst other things, that if this beautiful style had been borrowed from any foreign original whatsoever, we should have possessed some copy or other of it, that was introduced all at once in a kind of complete and regular form. But no such specimen can be pointed out. On the contrary, we see this art, like other

\* See the History of Winchester, vol. ii. p. 184. Also Essays on Gothic Architecture, by the Rev. Thomas Warton, Rev. J. Bentham, Captain Grose, and the Rev. J. Milner, published by J. Taylor, at the Architectural Library, Holborn.



arts, rising from a small beginning, and gradually growing up to its perfection through a succession of ages. It is évident to the eye-sight, that the Norman architects, in the 11th and 12th centuries, used to ornament the plain surfaces of their churches with rows of circular arches; and that, by way of variety, they frequently caused these arches to intersect each other, which intersections formed pointed arches; and that they soon after began to open these intersections by way of windows; and that, in a very short time, they made all their arches pointed; and that they proceeded to ornament these with trefoils, canopies, &c. In short, it has been proved\*, both by history and theory, that as the pointed arch is the chief character, so it is the grand source of all the other members, and of all the ornaments of architecture in question. I am far, however, from asserting that the Normans of France and Italy, and the Christians of Europe in general, were not intent on the improvement of their churches at the same time that our ancestors were, or that the discoveries of one nation were not immediately communicated to the others: all that I maintain is, that as ecclesiastical architecture was no where so much encouraged as it was in England from the 11th century to the 15th, so I am convinced the chief merit of discovering and improving pointed arches is due to the Normans and English. The tradition of foreign countries, which ascribes the

\* See the above-mentioned History and Essays.



building of their most beautiful pointed cathedrals to our countrymen, confirms this opinion. Again, I do not mean to deny that pointed arches are to be met with in Syria, in the East Indies, and in the Moorish parts of Spain; but I deny that any of these arches are 600 years old; that is to say, are coeval with many of ours, or that they ever grew to be such miracles of grandeur and beauty as our ancient cathedrals.

Should you and your friends resolve upon building in the pointed, vulgarly called the Gothic style, it will, in the next place, be necessary to determine upon some particular order, or period, as it is sometimes called of this style; for there is as much difference between the pointed order of Henry the Third's reign, in which Salisbury Cathedral was built, and that of Henry the Seventh's, who built the chapel of his name at Westminster, as there is between the Doric and the Composite orders of Grecian architecture. The chief distinguishing features of the different periods consists in the span of the arch. During the first period, indeed, that is to say, during the reigns of the three first Henries, this was not fixed, the angles being either very oblique and hardly perceptible, or else prodigiously sharp, and by no means elegantly formed. During the second period, namely, during the reigns of the three first Edwards, the taste of our architects directed them to prefer the form of pointed arch, in which right lines drawn from the springing or imposts across, and so up to



the crown of the arch, make an equilateral triangle. During the third period of the pointed style, which comprises the reigns of the three last Henries, the architects being more anxious about their own reputation, by hanging vast weights in the air, and surprising the spectators with the richness and intricacy of their work, than about the general effect of the buildings, made and brought down the roofs much lower than their predecessors had done. The dressings of this style went on increasing in richness, so that to take up the idea of my friend, the late Poet Laureate \*, the first period may be called 3. — that of the *simple Gothic*, the second that of the 3. — *ornamented Gothic*, and the third that of the — *florid Gothic* †. You will easily judge from what I have here said that I myself prefer the second order, as better calculated to answer the grand object of the pointed style, and as being gracefully ornamented without being gorgeously be-decked. Hence also you comprehend that I like the style of York, Lincoln, and Winchester churches, better than I do that of King's College, Cambridge, and Henry the Seventh's, Westminster. Still there may be a necessity, for the sake of economy, or to gain more space in a chapel, to adopt the flat arch of the third order (but without its usual dressings) rather than the grand aspiring arch of the second. Which ever

\* The Rev. Thomas Warton.

† Observations on Spencer's Fairy Queen.



order, however, you choose, you must strictly adhere to it, within the same range of building, for all your windows, doors, ballusters, picture frames, and for your very tabernacle. If you wish to be convinced of the necessity of this rule, go to Lincoln's Inn Chapel, and observe the bad effect of the great Inigo Jones's inattention, who, in attempting the pointed style, has placed a sharp angled East window under a remarkable flat arched ceiling.

From the whole of what I have said concerning the pointed architecture, you will judge how difficult, or rather impossible, it is to build a chapel in it without the assistance of persons who understand it, and are accustomed to it. At all events, you must have an architect who is completely master of it, and this architect must furnish you, not only with a plan, but also with working drawings for the several parts of the building, the decorations, and the furniture. But where is this master of ancient architecture to be found? Not among the men who have been employed by the king, the nobles, and the prelates, to build what are called their Gothic Castles, and to *improve*, as the dabblers undertake to do, the master-pieces of antiquity, our awful cathedrals, while "they do not understand," as an able judge pronounced of them, "either the nature or "the uses of a cathedral\*." I know one man,

\* This is what the late Dr. Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury, publicly declared at a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries, concerning



indeed, who is eminently qualified to direct any work of this nature, and who, without either an original or a copy to look at, could sit down and make pure and perfect drawings for any kind of buildings in the pointed style, from a monument to a cathedral, according to any one of its different periods; but this architect resides not in Ireland, but in England, and he is so inflexibly strict in adhering to ancient rules and practice, that he would not build for a prince who should require the slightest deviation from them\*.

It is probable, that the difficulties attending the erection of your chapel in the pointed style may determine you to adopt the Grecian architecture; and certainly, it is infinitely preferable, to have a perfect work of the latter kind, than a caricatura of the former; which, indeed, is the proper term for most of the Gothic chapels, as they are called, which I have met with in England.

the celebrated architect who had, just before he came to the see, spent 16,000*l.* in sweeping away the altar, chapels, monuments, and whatever else was most interesting in that sacred edifice, in destroying its proportions, and in making a confused jumble of its ornaments. See a Dissertation on the modern Style of altering ancient Cathedrals, by the Rev. J. Milner, D. D. F. S. A. Nichols, Red-Lion-Court, Fleet-Street: Keating, Brown, and Co.

\* Mr. Carter, Architect, Eaton-Street, Pimlico. See his Ancient Architecture of England; also his Specimens of Ancient Sculpture and Painting; but especially his Intersected Views of different Cathedrals, &c. of England, engraved at the expense of the Society of Antiquaries. With the most enthusiastic passion for the pointed architecture, his whole life has been devoted to the study of it, from its great principles down to its minutest ornaments.



I will, then, suppose you have fixed upon the Grecian style : it will still remain with you to choose amongst the different orders of this style, whether your buildings shall be of the simple Tuscan or Doric Order, or of the elegant Ionic Order, or of the florid Corinthian or Composite Order. This being once chosen, you must insist upon its being strictly adhered to ; and above all, you must prohibit the introduction of the smallest pointed arch, trefoil, quatrefoil, or pinnacle, and much more so of a spire. In fact, nothing can be more improper or incongruous than the practice of modern architects, in raising spires upon Grecian churches ; since the spire is the natural growth of the pointed arch, as I have elsewhere demonstrated \* : nor can any example of such an ornament be discovered among the pure remains of Greece or Rome. This matter being settled, you will next want a plan, the most important part of which will be the proportions.

Here in England, when a catholic chapel is to be built, the architect, who is generally some common carpenter or mason, instead of being directed to take his proportions from those well-studied models of our religious ancestors, in the churches and chapels which still subsist in every part of the land, is left to form his own plan ; and he, being possessed with no other ideas than those of building

\* See History of Winchester, and Essays on Gothic Architecture, quoted above.



a *place of worship*, and of following the fashion as nearly as he can, fails not to go and measure some one or more of the snug chapels of ease or Methodist meeting-houses, which sprout up, like mushrooms, around us. In short, he values himself upon the breadth which he gives to his plan ; and if he can even bring it to the form of a square, he fancies he has gained the best shape for a chapel possible. But these ideas argue an ignorance of the characteristical difference between our public worship and that of the Methodists and other Protestants. Theirs consists, in a manner, wholly in words, ours chiefly in action. They meet to hear the Bible expounded, and the Common Prayer read to them, in a room to which they do not attach the idea of greater sanctity than to any other place. Accordingly, the pulpit, with the king's arms painted on the wall, and some huge boxes, called pews, to contain the people, are all that is required for the ornament and furniture of such a place of worship. Whereas the essential part of our worship, like that of the people of God in all past times, consists in an action of the most solemn and awful kind ; one that much more perfectly and emphatically expresses the supreme dominion, and the infinite power and goodness of God, than any words whatsoever can do. In short, we worship God by sacrifice, as his servants were ever accustomed and taught to do, both under the law of nature, and under the written law. Our sacrifice, however, is as much superior to theirs, as the divine Victim upon our



altars excels, in dignity and merit, the animals which were immolated by the patriarchs and priests of the old law in memory of him. Now, for the due performance of a worship of this nature, it is easily conceived that a sanctuary of a sufficient size, and one removed to a proper distance from the people, is requisite ; yet still so that they may be able to see the action that is going forward, and to hear the priest in his prayers to God, and his addresses to them. In a word, the oblong form of building is that which has generally been approved of and adopted, not only by Catholics, but likewise by those different denominations of eastern Christians, whose chief worship, like ours, consists in sacrifice.

To determine the best relative proportions of a catholic chapel, is a difficult, or rather an impossible thing, as these must vary, more or less, according to different circumstances : but, after examining many ancient chapels, and plans of chapels, it appears to me, that one third part of the whole inside length is in general a good proportion for its inside breadth (where there are no galleries or side aisles), as likewise for its interior height ; though certainly a few feet more added to the height would be gained in the grandeur of the chapel\*. Still, as the people ought,

\* It may not be amiss to insert here the proportions of some of the most celebrated churches, ancient and modern.

Winchester Cathedral

		Ft.	In.
Total inside length from West to East,	—	53 <sup>1</sup>	3



by all means, to see and hear what is going forward at the altar, as I said before, and likewise to hear distinctly the sermon, hence, to prevent carrying the nave to a length incompatible with

			Ft.	In.
Breadth of the nave and side aisles,	—		86	
Height of the vaulting,	—	—	78	
Length of the transept or cross aisle from North to South,			208	
Length of the choir and sanctuary,	—		138	
Breadth of the choir,	—	—	41	6

#### York Minster.

Total length,	—	—	498	
Breadth of the nave and aisles,		—	109	
Height of the vaulting,	—	—	99	

#### Lincoln Cathedral.

Total length,	—	—	498	
Breadth of nave and aisles,	—	—	83	
Height of vaulting,	—	—	83	

#### St. Paul's, London.

Total length,	—	—	—	500
Breadth of the nave and side aisles,		—		107
Length of transept or cross aisle,		—		248
Height of vaulting,	—	—		88

#### St. Peter's, at Rome.

Total length of the church,	—	Palms	970	722
Interior length,	—	—	829	594
Length of transept,	—	—	225	
Height of vaulting,	—	—	200	

It is, however, to be observed that a large cathedral is not intended to unite a single congregation in one and the same service; it is evidently too vast for this purpose: but it was meant to be a basilic, or corps of building for various religious purposes. This idea has never once found place in the brain of any of our modern cathedral reformers: no wonder, then, they have made so many blunders and so much havoc in them. It is from the comparative length and breadth of the choir, which is the part particularly destined to the principal service, that these proportions are to be taken.



these purposes, you act with perfect judgment in your principal new built chapels in Ireland, by adding a transept to them. Thus they are built in the form of a cross ; a form which, though unknown to pagan antiquity, has been adopted by christian architects, as well in the circular as in the pointed style, both for its conveniency and its analogy with the christian worship.

Next to the rule of proportion, undoubtedly stands that of symmetry, or a due correspondence of the parts. Your columns, windows, and doors, then, ought perfectly to correspond with each other from end to end, and from side to side, except that the East \*, or altar end, requires to be fitted up in a more rich and elegant manner than the rest of the chapel, as I am going to explain, though undoubtedly in the same style and order with it. Hence, in fixing upon the site of your intended chapel, you must, if possible, choose a spot not encumbered, and not likely to be encumbered with other buildings close to it, in order that you may have windows on both sides, and those facing each other. Hence also, should there be a necessity of forming the entrance door of the chapel at one of the sides, in-

\* It was a primitive practice of the Church to pray towards the East, on which account the ancient churches are almost always found to be built from East to West, and the altars to be placed at the East end of them. The custom is so general, that when, from particular circumstances, there is a necessity of building a church or chapel in a different direction, it is usual to call the altar end the East end, and the opposite the West end of the sacred edifice.



stead of the West end, I should recommend, by all means, a sham door to be made opposite to it, for the purpose of preserving symmetry.

What the head is to the human body, the Altar is to a church or chapel of Catholics, or of other Christians, whose supreme worship consists in sacrifice. The word "ALTAR," says Johnson, "is received with Christianity into "all European languages.\*" But where is the scriptural or the proper meaning of the words *altar* and *priest* without a sacrifice? Not to proceed, however, into this subject, you will judge from the importance of that member, the altar, with respect to the whole body of an ancient church, and the obvious reference which all the other members have to it, of the ignorance and folly of our modern church improvers, who always begin their depredations with sweeping away the altars and altar screens! In case these men have not taste enough to perceive that all their gutting, and levelling, and scraping, and painting, and varnishing, tend to nothing else but to turn an awful place of worship into a mere hall, or promenade, they ought at least to have learning enough to read the first Rubric in their Common Prayer Book, which pointedly condemns their practice†.

Whatever magnificence then, or appropriate decorations your fund will afford, this is the part

\* Dictionary

† This requires that "The chancels shall remain as they have "done in times past."—See *Dissertation on the Modern Style, &c.*



of the chapel on which to bestow them. The expense, however, of a complete marble altar, may, I think, well be spared in these damp climates as such altars are found to be always exceedingly cold and clammy to the hand, and to keep the altar-linen in a perpetual state of moisture. On the other hand, I do not approve of the parsimony of substituting a mere wooden altar, painted in imitation of marble, with a plain cross of Malta in the front, for the rich and varying antependiums of our ancestors. If you will have a tomb altar, let it be made in imitation of that most exquisite tomb altar at Wardour chapel, or of the equally beautiful one at Lulworth chapel. Should this be impracticable, you might place on the front of your altar a carved and gilt relievo of the mystical Lamb, resting on the sealed volume, or of the pelican feeding its young, or of the chalice and host, with angels in the act of adoration, or of the monogram of JESUS\*, or of CHRIST, surrounded with rays. If the altar is square, the figure of a dead Christ, with those of the Blessed Virgin, St John, &c. painted in light and shade, so as to represent carved work, would have an exceeding good effect in that situation. I need

\* The letters J. H. S. which are so frequently seen, do not mean *Jesus Hominum Salvator*, as is generally supposed; but they are the Greek monogram, or cypher of the sacred name, being the three first letters of it, viz. of ΙΗΣΟΥΣ. In like manner the X, with the P (which in Greek has the power of R) inserted in it, is the monogram of the word CHRIST, being the two first letters of ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ.



not mention that the altar ought to be raised above the level of the chapel, by a proper number of steps, in proportion to the height and length of the latter.

The tabernacle upon the middle of the altar, you well know, is to us what its type, the Ark of the Covenant, was to the ancient people of God, and therefore ought, like that, to be the richest and most ornamented article in the whole sanctuary. Its form should be that of a regular building, and it may, with great propriety, be a model of the west end of your own chapel. It, however, admits of being decorated with niches, statues, vases, and other appropriate ornaments, in carving and gilding. But with respect to gilding, however, it is proper to observe, that this should be used with great caution. A proper quantity of it helps the effect of ornaments in a very great degree: but too much of it is tawdry and contemptible. The crucifix which surmounts the tabernacle, ought certainly to be the best executed one you can procure. It ought also, in the situation which it holds, to be elegantly ornamented, and proportioned in size to it. If in any article there is room for fancy, it is in the form of the candlesticks; for those intended for domestic use are of such various shapes that it is not easy to find out a new one, and on the other hand, it is desirable that nothing appertaining to the divine worship should have a vulgar and household appearance. Neither the candlesticks, nor the flowers, reliquaries, or other ornaments about the altar,



should be too numerous, bulky, or gorgeous. The *Simplex Munditiis* is a universal rule in decorations of every sort.

A beautiful altar-piece, proportioned to the size of the altar end, is obviously so essential an ornament that I hardly need mention it, except by way of observing that there are many excellent pictures proper for altar-pieces now upon sale at reasonable prices in various parts of London: as, among the loads of paintings, which have been brought into England of late years from abroad, those which represent the most pious subjects are in the least request. I must say, however, that the most pious of all subjects, namely, the crucifixion, is the one which I am least partial to for an altar-piece, because it is a repetition of what is exhibited immediately beneath it on the tabernacle. To be brief, the whole east end of the chapel ought to present an interior façade, or piece of finished architecture. Four pillars, or pilasters, of the order you have previously chosen should support a cornice, or rather entablature, which should finish in a closed or open pediment. The tympanum of the latter admits of any of the devices mentioned above, as proper for the front of the altar, in relievo, painting, or stained glass. The open space also between the columns on each side, and directly over the credence table, is well adapted to a niche and statue, or a well proportioned picture, and the cornice may, with great propriety, be crowned with urns or other vases.



Supposing, however, the chapel to be built in the form of a cross, as I have said is the case with some of your best chapels in Ireland, and that the altar is placed in the centre of the intersection, you will ask how the latter is to be ornamented, so as to preserve its character of superior magnificence and importance? I grant the difficulty there is, in this case, to gain the desired effect, at least if there be an eastern shaft to the church or chapel extending beyond the altar, and of the same height with it. Our ancestors shut up their high altars to the east with those exquisite altar screens, either of open work, as at Durham, or of close work, as at St. Albans and Winchester, which are the most astonishing of all their beautiful works\*. But then, the eastern shafts of the cross, beyond the altar, in these churches, had no communication with the worship performed at it. In St. Peter's Church at Rome, a most splendid and beautiful canopy†, formed of the bronze which heretofore covered the cupola of the Pantheon, and gilt, is raised over the high altar, on rich

\* This particularly holds good with respect to the two last-mentioned altar screens. The carved work in them, though executed in stone, is so delicate as to baffle the efforts of the most laborious artists barely to make a drawing of it.

† Notwithstanding the richness and elegance of this large and beautiful canopy, executed after a design of the celebrated Bernini, it must be admitted that if this wonder of the world, St. Peter's of Rome, is deficient in any thing, it is in the importance of its high altar. The great Michael Angelo had a plan for correcting this, one part of which required that the altar should be raised 50 feet high.



twisted pillars of the same metal, to the height of 87 feet. This gives the altar as much dignity as it well admits of in that situation. In case, however, there should be no eastern shaft in your new chapel, or only one with a low roof, for the purpose of a private chapel, or a sacristy, like the Lady chapels in most of our cathedrals, your altar will then admit of all the above-mentioned decorations, and even of a painted east window instead of an altar-piece.

I come now to speak of the body of the chapel; and first with respect to galleries. Indeed every canon of architectural taste must yield to necessary convenience and economy. Hence if galleries are requisite to contain your numbers, they must certainly be erected; otherwise be assured that these encumbrances take off from the beauty and solemnity of your sacred edifice, but much more those which run along the sides of it, than when there is barely one at the west end.

With respect to your ceiling, if you leave this to the plasterer, he will give you ornament enough, in circles, festoons, flowers, and such other ornaments as he is accustomed to form in drawing-rooms; but on this very account, if there were no better reason, they ought to be proscribed from the house of sacrifice and prayer. To make short of the matter, as there is no kind of ceiling for churches in the pointed style equal in beauty to groining, so there is none for those in the Grecian style to be compared with circular



arching. If, for want of sufficient pecuniary funds, or of sufficient space in your chapel, you cannot adopt the bold semicircular arch, you must be content with an elliptical one, and at all events you must restrain your plasterers from introducing the common ornaments with which they are accustomed to decorate their drawing-rooms, and square modern chapels. In case your circular or elliptical ceiling is supported with broad ornamented ribs, resting upon the cornices of pillars or pilasters, as in the vaulting of St. Peter's at Rome, and of Wardour Chapel, which is the St. Peter of modern English places of worship, I can conceive nothing in the Grecian style more appropriate or beautiful. The pillars themselves, or the pilasters, in chapels, where there are no side galleries, and where the congregation is decent and orderly, should be continued down to the floor of the building; but where the people are of a different description, and the pillars or pilasters are not of a firmer texture than plaster or deal wood, it will be advisable to make the latter terminate in consoles or brackets, at one third of the distance from the architrave to the ground.

As no circumstance is more favourable to awful and sublime sensations than the "dim religious light" which poets have celebrated\*, and philosophers have remarked upon †, (at the same

\* Milton's *Il Penseroso*.

† Burke on the Sublime.



time that sufficient light must be had for all necessary purposes) it is advisable, in case you cannot procure a sufficient quantity of painted or stained glass, to place your windows very high; that is to say, within a few feet of the ceiling. At Wardour no windows at all are to be seen in the body of the chapel, which contributes greatly to the awe which the stranger feels at his entrance into it. Nevertheless there is quite sufficient light from the sky to read a book, or to view distinctly the beautiful pictures, one of which adorns every vacant space between the pilasters. The fact is, there are windows of a sufficient size, one over each picture, but the sight of them is happily intercepted by the projecting cornice beneath them. In chapels, having side galleries, there must necessarily be windows, or portions of windows in the aisles below them. In this case, if painted or stained glass is not to be had, the desired effect may be partly obtained by glazing the windows with rough glass, which is nothing more than common glass, one side of which has been rubbed with sand and water till it becomes impossible to see through it, whilst it transmits the light as well as ever. Perhaps you will say it is owing to my Gothic taste that I prefer casements to sashes; but, leaving this out of the question, the plumber can dispose his lead into any shape that is desired, with much greater facility than the joiner can his wood. Thus it is easy in a case-



ment window to have a border all round each of the lights, and a circle in the upper part of it to contain stained or painted glass, when the proprietor is not able to glaze the whole window in that manner, I could wish that every window in your chapel, had a contrivance to open part of it, and that there were also certain apertures in the ornamental work of the ceiling, yet so as not to disfigure it, to answer the purpose of ventilators. It is hardly possible to procure too much fresh air in chapels crowded as yours are : and the upper region is the proper place to introduce it, because thither the heat and vapours ascend, and air thus introduced does not flow in a current upon any part of the congregation, to the danger of their health.

There are two pieces of furniture in most chapels which it is difficult to dispose of properly, the organ and the pulpit. The former generally finds its place in a gallery at the west end of the chapel. Sometimes, however, the choir, who must be near the organ, object to that situation. In other instances, it cannot be so placed without obstructing a beautiful west window. In these circumstances, I would not indeed sacrifice the organ itself, but I would sacrifice the case of it by requiring the builder to dispose of his pipes horizontally, or in some such manner as should neither spoil symmetry, nor conceal beauty. At the chapel of New College, Oxford, the pipes of the organ are so placed along the mullions of the grand west window, as rather to help its



effect than to obstruct it. The pulpit cannot be stationary, without both injuring symmetry, and taking up a great deal of space where it is most wanted. Why, then, should not the preacher be contented with a light moveable pulpit, which can be wheeled from the vestry directly before the altar, or, if the chapel is small, with a large and firm reading-desk, covered with a suitable veil? It is evident, that in this situation he best commands the whole of his audience: whereas, when the pulpit is placed, in the ordinary way, on one side of the chapel, he can never see the whole of his flock at once, and generally is overlooked by a part of it.

I would not, in erecting a new chapel, be indifferent as to the form and colour of the benches, nor even of the cushions. The former should be as light in their construction as is consistent with a proper degree of strength. Nothing can injure the effect of a chapel more than those clumsy boxes and enclosed sheep-pens, called pews, which the Catholics of late years have borrowed from the Protestants. I am speaking here of England, and particularly of London, for I never saw any thing of the sort in Ireland. Look at the exquisite stall-work in the choirs of our ancient cathedrals, and even at the plain oaken benches for the common people, which still remain in many of the parish churches; you will there see how well our ancestors knew how to combine lightness with strength, and elegance



with convenience. The benches and cushions should be perfectly uniform, and of the same colour, if possible, with the chapel itself, which I suppose to be a grey, a blue, an olive, or a yellow hue. If there must be a variety of colours in any instance whatsoever, let there be as little of it as possible, and by all means avoid strong contrasts.

Thus, dear Sir, I have executed the task you imposed upon me, by throwing together my thoughts upon chapel-building. I know very well, that if you shew this letter to our protestant friend Mr. P. he will ridicule the whole of these details as superstitious minutiae, and he will ask, if it is not possible to be impressed with proper religious feelings, without all these artificial means of exciting them?——There can be no doubt but Mr. P. when he enters within the bare damp walls of his parish church, and views from his enclosed box, the enormous pulpit over his head, and those tremendous beasts, the lion and the unicorn, before his face; there can be no doubt, I say, but he is struck with as much reverence and devotion as if he were praying in the modern Vatican at Rome, or in the ancient Cathedral of Lincoln, as it existed 300 years ago: but it is not so with you and me. We are so apt to be distracted and tepid in our prayers, that we stand in need of every aid from sensation as well as reflection, to fix our wandering thoughts, and to warm our cold hearts. But what is most to the



present purpose, let Mr. P. consider, that He who *knew what was in man* \*, judged such exterior means of exciting the attention and piety of his chosen people to be so fit and necessary, that he deigned himself to enter into far more numerous and minute details of this nature in his revealed word, than those contained in the present letter†.

But the Waterford packet, which will convey my former letter as well as this to you, is on the point of sailing, and I myself, after calling upon a few friends in Monmouthshire, the Malvern Hills, and Worcester, must hasten home to my house at Wolverhampton, where I shall be glad to learn your opinion concerning my ideas of Ecclesiastical Architecture. In the mean time, I remain,

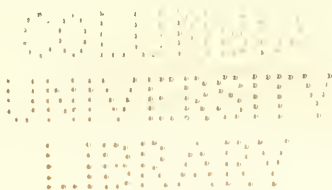
Dear Sir,

yours, &c.

J. M.

\* Jchn ii. 25.

† See the details concerning the tabernacle and the temple, in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Kings, &c.





## ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Page 82. N. B. Sir R. Musgrave vindicates the use of those barbarous tortures which were so generally inflicted to extort confessions during the disturbances in Ireland ; at the same time that he acknowledges them to be contrary to law ! This is equivalently saying, that one party is at liberty to violate the laws and constitution, but not the other party. He even vindicates the leading out of prisoners, taken up on mere suspicion, and shooting them by dozens, without even the brief ceremony of a court-martial !—A friend of mine, about fifteen years ago, published a defence of Nero. It is a pity, for the sake of his cause, that he did not live to witness the conduct of Sir Judkin Fitzgerald, and to read the history of Sir Richard Musgrave.

Page 94. N. B. Those writers who, with Bishop Nicholson, bring St. Patrick's biographer, Probus, down to the tenth century, are presumed to be ignorant that he is named among the respectable authors whose works were in the library of York Cathedral in the eighth century by the celebrated Alcuin. See *De Pontif. et Sanct. Eborac apud Gale*.

*Ibid.* N. B. The British Abbot Nennius, to whom Ledwich very absurdly ascribes the first invention of the alledged fable of St. Patrick, in his account of this saint appeals to more ancient Irish documents concerning him. See *Hist. Brit. c. 60*.



## ERRATA.

Page 7, line 2, *for* is *read* are;—p. 9, l. 20, *for* whatever *read* all the;—p. 12, l. 9, *for* Bobis *read* Bobbio;—p. 15, l. 15, *for* antiquarian *read* antiquary;—p. 21, l. ult. *read* of hope;—p. 30, 2d note, *for* Condition of Ireland, *read* Catholic Question;—p. 31, l. 16, *for* desired *read* devised;—p. 33, l. 4, *read* dominions," \* the; note l. 15, *for* Slattery *read* Scatterry; note 2d, l. 3, *for* ce *read* se;—p. 34, l. 19, *for* he *read* they;—p. 43, after note 2d, *add* See also Alcuin de Pontif. Ecc. Ebor.;—p. 58, l. 10, *for* on which *read* at which;—p. 59, l. 25, *dele* in question;—p. 65, l. 3, *read* will prove, that;—p. 67, l. 21, *for* would *read* will;—p. 68, continue the inverted commas before the nine first lines;—p. 70, note l. 6, *read* a Catholic, who will hesitate;—p. 71, l. 22, *for* in *read* into;—p. 72, l. 1, *for* for *read* but;—p. 87, l. 6, *for* is *read* are;—p. 101, note l. 4, *for* 5th *read* 7th;—p. 103, l. 2, *for* Latony *read* Lanoy;—p. 104, l. 3, *deletions*, *dele* s,—p. 104, l. 24, *read* mission, orders, and archiepiscopal jurisdictions from Pope;—p. 112, l. 9, *for* absurd *read* absurd;—p. 118, l. 19, *for* ; *read* ,—p. 135, l. 21, maintains, *dele* s;—p. 139, l. 19, *for* fourth *read* fifth; note l. penult, *for* inclusorio *read* in clusorio;—p. 153, note 4, l. 5, *for* eum centissimus, *read* cum centissimis;—p. 148, note 2, l. 4, *for* creaturæ *read* creatura;—p. 155, l. 12, *after* does *add* keep;—p. 156, l. 10, *dele* free;—p. 157, *read* numbers;—p. 159, note, *read* Patrum;—p. 176, l. 20, *for* In fact, *read* Indeed;—p. 185, l. 1, *for* he *read* they;—p. 199, l. penult, *for* two thirds *read* two fifths;—p. 202, l. 16, *read* cottagers;—p. 213, l. 1, *read* or on that;—p. 232, l. 8, *read* catechisms;—p. 240, note, *read* spargite,—p. 242, l. 20, *read* extends;—p. 248, l. 5, *after* vessels *add* sailing;—*ibid.* l. 11, *for* the *read* this;—p. 257, *for* oblique *read* obtuse;—p. 258, l. 9, made the arches much flatter and,



Dunbrody Abbey P 220

Dimensions of the Cathedrals of  
Winchester, York, Lincoln

St Pauls, and St Peters at Rome 263.















































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